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# Official Magazine Dreamcast™

Issue 11: February 2001

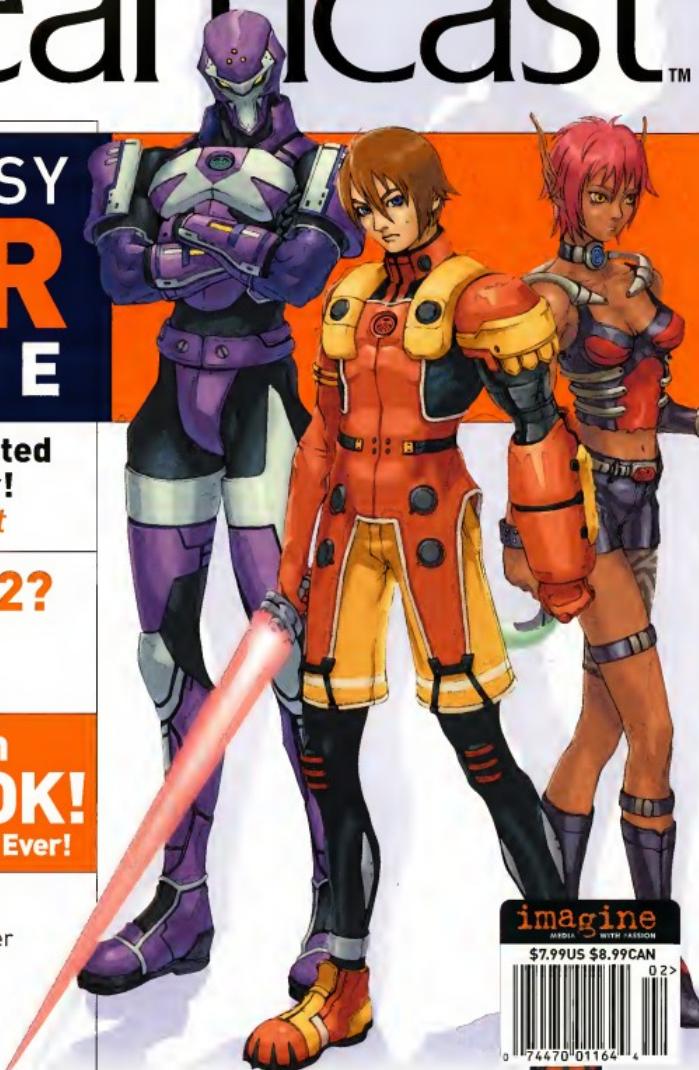
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# TELE

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# BILLBLUED





PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

## FEATURES

MANY PAGES WITH MANY WORDS—SWEAT TILL YOU BLEED, SUCKAS.

### >FORBIDDEN GAMES 22

ODCM took a peek behind Japan's Hello Kitty curtain of cute—and what we saw made us blush. Enjoy this glimpse of the Japanese games you'll never get to play

### >FROM GEEK TO CHIC 30

Gaming's transition from geek fetish to mainstream billion-dollar industry has taken less than ten years; and it all began with a little blue hedgehog.

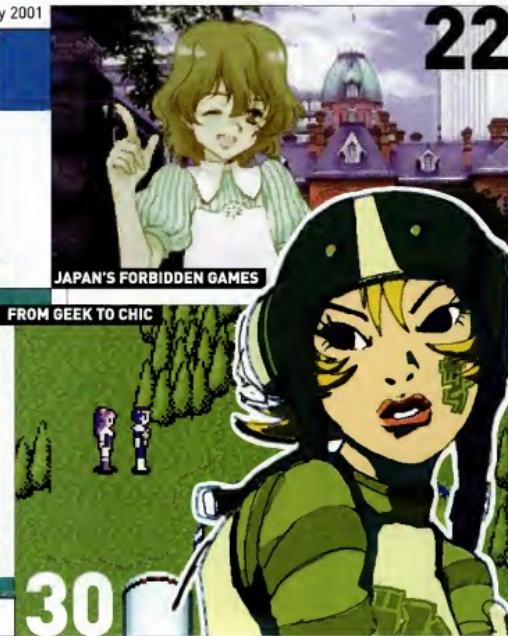
### >PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 34

Online and on target? ODCM hits exclusive, hands-on pay dirt; and you got the verdict

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JAPAN'S FORBIDDEN GAMES

FROM GEEK TO CHIC

22

## DEPARTMENTS

### >DC-ROM 8

If it doesn't work, don't give up and start using our shiny, pretty demo disc as a coaster; wipe it off! You know you hate cleaning, but does it make it more fun if we tell you that you can spit on it first?

### >D-MAIL 10

You ask, we answer. The only problem with getting so much wonderful mail from so many wonderful people is that it reminds us of how many wonderful jobs there are, in this wonderful world, which contain long stretches of free time that can be filled up by writing emails, stretching, napping, eating and peeing. But don't worry—we're too busy cringing ODCM to go out and find 'em!

### >TZ-ARCHIVE 80

Every game we've ever played. Rated!

### >ENDZONE 94

ODCM's exclusive TalkBack interview series opens with our candid tête-à-tête with the creators of Soul Reaver 2. Just how great will this game be? Find out!



"I never  
lose."

## COMING SOON

IF THE FUTURE WAS NOW, WE COULD STOP HYPPING AND START COMPLAINING

### FLOIGAN BROTHERS 44

Wackiness in spades: Visual Concepts' latest jewel is laden with more slap than you can shake a stick at. ODCM spends some quality time with the Floi poloi

### 18-WHEELER 46

When Big Trucks Attack! Get the skinny on Sega's laziest Naomi arcade port. Large Merge, Kevin Bacon, trucker slang and other assorted goodies

### SONIC ADVENTURE 2 48

The rambunctious rodent returns for another spin around the block. And if what we've played so far is any indication, this is going to be one of 2001's best games.

### PROJECT JUSTICE 50

No, it isn't Gee Dub Bush's new capital punishment program. It's the sequel to *Kiba!* Schools, one of the most beloved fighting games in recent memory. With school-girls...

### FIGHTING VIPERS 2 52

Just when you thought it was dead, the AM2 classic returns to your Dreamcast. Not since Willis Reed returned for Game 7 of the 1970 NBA finals has there been a comeback like this

### HEAD HUNTER 54

After many months of secrecy surrounding its newest Mission Impossible-style game, Sega lets the cat out of the bag. Or, actually, they only let us peek: our heads inside the bag for a few seconds to check out the cat. Here's what we saw before the dang thing scratched us

### ALIEN FRONT ONLINE 56

ODCM takes another look at what is easily one of our most eagerly-anticipated titles. It's got all sorts of things we like: Big tanks to drive, big cities to destroy, big buildings to crumble, big technologies to employ (online multiplayer, real-time voice, etc.) – big hit in the making

### TYPING OF THE DEAD 58

Mavis Beacon meets House of the Dead in one of the most excitingly inauspicious gameplay premises in the history of videogames. Amazingly, it's already great—but kids, can you type "c-a-r-p-a-l t-u-n-n-e-l s-y-n-d-r-o-m-e?"



**WELL, THE HOLIDAYS ARE**

behind us (well, as I write this they haven't actually started, but by the time you read it they should be just wrapping up).

Anyway, I could go on about the huge number of killer hits that shipped for Dreamcast this season, but that would be gloating. But what the hell, let's gloat: *Shenmue*, *Jet Grind Radio*, *Test Drive Le Mans*, *StarLancer*, *Grandia II*, *Skies of Arcadia*, *Tony Hawk 2*, *NFL 2K1*, *NBA 2K1*, *Quake 3 Arena*, *Samba de Amigo*. And those are just the games that got 9s or 10s. Plus, of course, we got the world's first online console gaming ISP.

So, what do we have to look forward to in 2001? First, all the awesome games that slipped: *Urnest Tournament*, *Half-Life*, *Half-Life Multiplayer* and *Metropolis Street Racer*. Then, in January, we're going to get the earth-shattering *Phantasy Star Online* (see our Cover Story on page 36). (Note: if you never see another issue, it's because we got too addicted to Piso.)

Beyond that, Sega—at its recent Executive Games Summit—announced (in addition to giving us the dirt on the future of the Dreamcast platform; see page 12) that it had between 30 and 45 titles planned for 2001. Holy crap! Forty-five SEGA games? Clearly this company is out to get every single dollar in our pockets, and every single second of our spare time.

And for one, couldn't be happier! When the world's greatest game company tells you that it could potentially be coming out with three new games every month, well, it's pretty clear that the future for Dreamcast in 2001 is going to be pretty damn rosy.

One last thing: After a successful test run, next year, ODCM plans to take RPG Day national. It's the Friday after Thanksgiving. No work. The malls are packed. The movie theaters are packed. Your house is full of food. Solutions get up early, make yourself a sandwich, pop in that RPG you've been meaning to beat and get to it. In 2001, this Day falls on Friday, November 23. Plan on it.

Later,  
Chris



## >TESTZONE

**HYPE? HIP? WE PLAY THEM ALL SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO.** REVIEWED:

### NBA 2K1 62

Even though we love about your favorite sport and the NBA is present and accounted for (except for Jack Nicholson hitting courtside at all the Laker games)

### READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 66

is the imitable Evan Shamoon says, "No kicking!" This might be boxing for the masses, but it's still boxing...and it's still fun.

### HOYLE CASINO 68

You don't have to be a pro to play it. You can play it all night. There's even some cleavage to be ogled in this gameroom, thanks to Hoyle's NPCs. Of course, such pleasures always come at a price...

### MS. PAC MAN 72

If it's your first time playing Ms. Pac Man, welcome to the magic. If it's your second (or second millionth) time around, you'll know that the magic never fades...and neither do the ghosts, unless you eat 'em

### SPEC OPS II:

### OMEGA SQUAD 73

PC + ROTC = DC QT? ODCM RSVPs. Ever wonder why the other guys automatically win when you (or say) the word "port"? This game gives a pretty good demonstration of some big reasons

### RESIDENT EVIL 2 77

### SURF ROCKET RACERS 74

Surfing! Rocketing! Racing! No, these aren't the ingredients of the best damned tuna casserole you've ever had (although they could be). They make a good game; almost

### SUPER RUNABOUT:

### SAN FRANCISCO EDITION 76

Rico-Roni is hemophore replaced as the San Francisco Treat. Mmmmm! Yummy

### RESIDENT EVIL 2 77

Bigger, better, faster zombies! And you

didn't think it could get better...oh, pshaw

### BANG! 78

A game that brings along its own exclamatory point, like a little suitcase full of joy.

Or not. It's definitely full of something...

### KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS:

### THE NIGHTMARE CHILD 79

Two words: Not. Online. Two more words: Big. Shoes. This game is the closest thing to a regeneration of Dina's shoes that ODCM has ever seen. We're not kidding. And neither is Dina



## >HOWTO 82

MORE CODES THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A GAMESHARK AT!

## MAKE YOUR OWN 16-PAGE CODEBOOK!

You've heard us call our How-To section "Absolutely Code-tacular" before—and we weren't lying. Well, this time when we say that it's Absolutely Code-tacular, we're telling the truth! We've listened to the subsonic screams of your code-jonesing, and pretty much ignored it for a long time. Not because we didn't care; we just didn't have the space to print more codes. Well, get ready to be really, really happy (and to stop screaming like a teenage girl who doesn't have a boyfriend)—we're going to give you all the codes and ALL the directions you'll need to cut, fold and staple your own 16-PAGE CODEBOOK! Total satisfaction guaranteed: you'll never feel the need to buy another Lotto ticket.

And how many games are included in the index of this wonderbook? Well, we want it to be a surprise. But we'll give you a hint: there aren't less than 75...

PlayStation®2



SOMETIMES, IN ORDER  
TO COMPLETE YOUR JOURNEY,  
YOU HAVE TO GO BACK  
TO ITS BEGINNING.

LEGACY OF KAIN

# SOUL REAVER 2



Dreamcast



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Dreamcast



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*Official Dreamcast Magazine*

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"...this will indeed be the first epic RPG on Dreamcast."

[www.ign.com](http://www.ign.com)

"Grandia II is easily the most impressive next-generation RPG we've seen, and the first true RPG epic for a next-generation console."

[www.thegia.com](http://www.thegia.com)

"Take a new look at what is surely the best-looking RPG yet on a next-generation console..."

*Gamer's Republic Online*

"...set to give sub-par developers a lesson in how to do a DC RPG right."

*GameFan Magazine*

"Any RPG fan would be insane to miss out on this fantastic gameplay experience and it could go far in converting those who previously rode the RPG fence."

*GamerWeb.com*

"If you want your copy of Grandia 2 this holiday season, don't expect Santa's little elves to make you a special copy, pre-order it now or you may not get it until late January."

[www.GA-Console.com](http://www.GA-Console.com)

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ファンタシースターオンライン





With the Phantasy Star Online instant translator, you can choose from hundreds of words and phrases to communicate with online gamers around the world. You enter, "Help me! I don't want to die!" Your teammate in Japan sees: "助けてくれよ。死にたかねよ。" It's just one of the advanced features on the next generation of the legendary Phantasy Star series. Phantasy Star Online will immerse you in the most complete role-playing experience possible—not to mention what it'll do for your vocabulary.

[sega.com/phantasystaronline](http://sega.com/phantasystaronline)



Dreamcast



# THE SEVEN SAMURAI

That's what we call the six fancy-kickin' demos and one maverick vid on this disc. This is some of the best stuff that Japanese and American developers have to offer: riding the cutting edge of this century's wave of innovation.

So just when you thought that your loved ones were all out of presents, DCROM has ripped you a brand spiffy spankin' new one. Hot off the presses, here comes the stuff that makes your Dreamcast sing—exclusive sneak peeks at levels from **Metropolis Street Racer** (balls-out racing in hyper-realistic environments; if we had to name the game that we get most questions about from fellow game journos, this would be it. It could be the title that finally makes Dan stop saying "Best. Game. Ever." about **F355 Challenge**), **Outtrigger** (first-person shooter from the Land of the Rising Sun), **18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker** (big trucks, big wheels, big game), **Max Steel** (third-person adventure to the max) and **4x4 Evolution** (more SUVs than a Nordstrom parking lot). Plus we've got a brand new web browser—**Version 2.6**, complete with mouse support. It even comes with Sega's new DreamCell application (see **DCDirect** page 16 for details, which allows you to make free long distance phone calls to anyone in the world. So now you can talk to all of your fellow Dreamcasters in Lisbon and Bora Bora.

As an added bonus for this issue, we've also got **Jurassic 5**'s newest video for you to check out—this disc is so fresh we almost don't want to give it away. Just be sure to read our directions (at right) for cleaning the disc!



## 18 WHEELER: AMERICAN PRO TRUCKER

PUB: SEGA RELEASE: MAY PLAYERS: 1

Take Sega's new trucking sim for a spin and see what it's like to cruise the highway with double-digit wheels (18 to be precise). Also, see what it's like to crush the cars that get in your way, barrel over trees and race against a diabolical enemy named Lizard Tail. The demo takes you for a ride you won't soon forget.

Stick: Steer  
D-Pad: Steer  
○ Shift  
□ Reverse  
○ Horn  
○ Change View  
△ Brake  
▽ Accelerate

## METROPOLIS STREET RACER

PUB: SEGA RELEASE: JANUARY PLAYERS: 1

Distinctly European and distinctly awesome, MSR has been a long time coming. If you've been with us from the start, you'll know what we mean. Race either against the clock or against another car to the streets of swingin' London. The game was recently delayed until January, so try it early on your trusty DCROM demo disc.

Stick: Steer  
D-Pad: Steer  
○ N/A  
□ Assist Select  
○ N/A  
○ Assist On/Off  
△ Brake  
▽ Forward

## MAX STEEL

PUB: MATTEL RELEASE: NOVEMBER PLAYERS: 1

Venture through the jungle and hit a some unsuspecting evil folks in our exclusive demo of Max Steel. You're armed to the teeth with some sweet weapons, and there are even a couple of interesting puzzles to solve. Give it a spin and let us know what you think. We know what we think; that's why it's on the demo disc.

Stick: Move Character  
D-Pad: Move Character  
○ Jump  
○ Punch  
○ Shoot  
○ Fall Whip  
△ Side Step  
▽ Close-up View

## BROWSER 2.6

DISC EXCLUSIVE

Greatest. Browser. Ever. The latest, greatest version of the Dreamcast browser festivus, for the first time, MOUSE SUPPORT! No longer must you use the analog stick, or worse, the D-pad to scroll around like some kind of second-class netizen. Add the keyboard, and you are a fully-outfitted Web surfer. Plus: use DreamCell and your Dreamcast to phone friends for free!

## OUTIGGER

PUBLISHER: SEGA RELEASE: MAY PLAYERS: 1

Sega's attempt to out-gun the Quake/Unreal/Half-Life FPS landscape. Outtrigger is nothing if not heluva fun. Blast your way through four crazy/festive stages of action, killing swarms of bad guys and getting to try out a bunch of weapons in the process. Try it from the first-person POV for the optimal experience.

Stick: Look view  
D-Pad: Move  
○ Fire weapon  
□ Reverse  
○ Zoom (first person)  
○ Change weapon  
○ Strafe left  
○ Jump  
○ Strafe right

## 4X4 EVOLUTION

PUBLISHER: MIDWAY RELEASE: OUT NOW PLAYERS: 1

If you thought 4-Wheel Thunder was the cream of the big-wheel crop, well, give 4x4 Evolution a shot. It's got lots of dirt, cool vehicles and big vehicles, and should provide you with at least an afternoon's worth of entertainment. It's also one of the prettier drives you'll take on your Dreamcast; so if aesthetics are your bag, give it a shot.

Stick: Steer  
D-Pad: Up: reset position  
○ N/A  
△ Brake  
▽ Accelerate

## JURASSIC 5: QUALITY CONTROL

PUBLISHER: SEGA RELEASE: OCTOBER PLAYERS: 1

Just when you thought DCROM had given you everything you could possibly want, we drop the new JS video on your unsuspecting heads. It's Quality Control, the title track from their latest LP Bounce to It. And what does it have to do with Dreamcast? It sounds suspiciously like a song from one of our fave soundtracks...

Stick: N/A  
D-Pad: N/A  
○ N/A  
○ N/A  
○ N/A  
○ N/A  
○ N/A  
○ N/A

## HAVING TROUBLE?

Having problems getting your disc to run? Didn't get one with your copy of this fine and upstanding publication? Send your name, mailing address, subscription number (if you are a subscriber), and the issue's date to: [dischelp@imaginemedia.com](mailto:dischelp@imaginemedia.com) and provide a brief description of what's wrong with the disc as well. **IMPORTANT!** This contact address is not for game news or information. If you have questions concerning game codes, information or Dreamcast news, please refer your inquiries to Sega or the appropriate third party.

**Help:** [dischelp@imaginemedia.com](mailto:dischelp@imaginemedia.com)



# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE

(and your demo disc)



We pride ourselves on good customer service, which is why we want to take the time to show you how to fix up a reluctant demo disc—or any CD, GD, or DVD-ROM for that matter. Got a disc that won't give up the goods? Before you trash it, microwave it, shatter it, run it over with your car or send it to Al Gore—or call the company to ask for a replacement that you just know will take forever to get to you—check out our handy-dandy guide to making disc problems go away as fast as Evan's hairline.

**Important disclaimer thingy:** You can scratch your discs and ruin them if you do this wrong. Proceed at your own risk. Look at this as a last resort, not normal disc maintenance.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

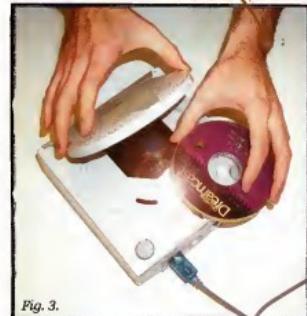


Fig. 3.

**Step 1:** Acquire some Windox, or another mild glass cleaner (you can even cut it 50% with water). Now, find a clean, soft, piece of cotton cloth, like an old T-shirt. Don't use polyester or terrycloth—and for godsakes, do not ever use a paper towel! Using anything but cotton could scratch the disc and make things worse. Spray a bit of cleaner onto the cotton.

**Step 2:** This is definitely the trickiest part of the cleaning process. Don't pat, don't dash, don't stroke, and don't scratch: use your cloth to rub in a straight line, from the center outward. Do not, not, not, rub in a circular motion around the disc—that will really mess things up. About ten to twelve rubs should cover the whole disc.

**Step 3:** The insertion. Let the disc dry (about ten minutes). Now that you've cleaned your disc, the last thing you want to do is get your grubby, greasy little fingers all over it; so please! Do what Evan does in this picture, and hold it gently by the edges. Slide it into place in your Dreamcast and close the cover. And there it is! You're good to go.

## It's not just the Disc, you see...

**Okay, folks, it's about time we gave you a nice, quick refresher course on the display options for your Dreamcast. There are four ways to get video out of your Dreamcast and onto your TV. Here's a rundown:**

**RF Adapter:** This is for attaching your DC to old-school TVs or monitors. It's good for portability, but you actually have to buy a special adapter to use an RF adapter; this is by far the worst option. Things are blurry. Stay away.

**Composite Cables:** The standard AV cables that come with the system; these deliver pretty good results.

**S-Video Cables:** A little pricier, but if your TV has S-Video inputs, you'll be amazed at just how crisp and clean the graphics look with this cable.

**VGA Box:** The ultimate. This \$40 box lets you play Dreamcast on a super-crisp VGA monitor display. It looks great, but all DC games aren't compatible with the VGA box, sadly.





# Team ODCM

**WHAT A MONT!** Between Shenmue, Jet Grind Radio, Test Drive Le Mans and the Phantasy Star Online preview build (and a few disco naps scored here and there), we frankly didn't get around to actually writing the magazine until this afternoon. Still, the end result was pretty good in our opinion, and we think you'll agree. It's the darkest time of the year, so I'd like to ask everyone this month just which games give them the strength to carry on when things look their bleakest...



**OHNS CHARLA**  
Editor-in-Chief

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. And once all of those tough pieces have left the building, it's time for Jet Grind Radio, Test Drive Le Mans or a little Prototype Enduro action. He claims that he can now actually race the Bmw track blindfolded, including pit stops and everything, since the entire Suzuki GP track is reverse, and win.



**DAN FITZPATRICK**  
Art Director

During the action of Quake 3 he got out his frustrations when he's feeling tense. A former hobbyist level designer, he's currently hoarding a Panther XL joystick under his desk, and has been known to even play online. Even plays online. Even, sadly, isn't much better at Quake than he was at NFL 2K2, you see.



**DINI FAYER**  
Managing Editor

No one's ever accused Dini of being overemotional, so it's no surprise that she tends to let off the deep end when she's upset: choosing the impossible cut and simple Penpen Trickon to get her through the day. "I'm not sure something about that cutscene gameplay and the way it drives everyone else nuts!" she says.



**FRANCISCA REYES**  
Senior Editor

For Francis, bad moods actually mean that she stays away from gaming toward the end of big baseball bat she has. She's also a fan of the game, everything's cool... just put down the bat... "No, we're just kidding; she actually goes back to all the RPGs she's beat and works to finish them again." Small side quest and to level up as high as possible.



**DAVE GORDON**  
Associate Art Director

Dave's new favorite game is Chicken Run. "I just love making the chickens get caught," he says gleefully. Dave, as you'll remember from our issue, has made it his motto to "A chicken is my pot, every single night." He's also been known to strap on the maracas (literally, with electrical tape) for an intense Samba session.



**EVAN SHAMRON**  
Associate Editor

Evan is all about Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3. "It's the trick by Tony Hawk Against the Machine combined with the hip clothes, we think, he can play for hours, and now that he's mastered the gap-to-manuals approach, he's become a real untopeable." It's time to watch him beat Blizz from Next Gen: that improves everyone's spirits!

# LETTER OF THE MONTH

## » InterNOT Gaming

First off, I want to congratulate all of you for the great effort on the magazine. It is safe to say that you guys produce some of the best writing in the industry. You tell the goods without being biased. It is also safe to say that it kicks ass the DC is beating the odds and hanging around for the battle against PS2. And a tough battle it will be.

The reason I am writing is to see your opinion on how console gaming is evolving into a vast Internet dominance. I may not be the oldest gamer (I'm 15), but ladies and gentlemen, I have experienced everything there is to possibly experience in videogaming for my age, and things cannot get much better than they are now. I am still an old-school gamer, and when I hear all this talk about console gamers' future going completely online it sickens me. I am not talking about the next generation. Tom Ford is going to have you buying levels monthly on the Internet. Now, I don't know exactly what he means, but I believe the point of console gaming is to sit back, relax with a controller in your hand, and play a game to a point in the night where your eyes gloss over and your fingers don't get tired from typing on a keyboard. If I want online games I sit down at my \$2000 PC and really experience online gaming. Do not get me wrong, I have an open mind to any future online possibilities, but I think gaming should stay where it is.

Tim Sullivan  
Via email

PS: Let us all bow our heads in a moment of silence for the arrival of Shenmue.

This is a hard call, Tim. There's no denying that online is where this industry is headed, but at the same time, it all depends on the quality of the games themselves. Whether a game is meant for offline or online play, if a game is sold and programmed expressly for what it is, it will stand as a classic experience. But if a game incorporates "throwaway" online capabilities just to cash in on the trend, then the potential is clearly wasted.

The **ODCM** staff is somewhat divided. In a sense, on the issue. Certain genres, like first person shooters, strategy and sports games are much more developed in the online arena, and have been tried and tested in head-to-head play. On PCs, online RPGs like Baldur's Gate and Everquest are also fine examples of how multiplayer adventure games can be done well. Online RPGs will not replace the single-player games, but will instead become their own sub-genre with the larger spectrum of RPGs.

So I wonder what all games will be going online any time soon or even in the future. It will take some time to iron out the kinks, but multiplayer games shouldn't be underestimated—they provide an amazing experience that often cannot be matched without the element of human interaction. It's true. Fighting off against a real human gamer adds that extra element of spontaneity and intelligence that are nowhere to be found when you're fighting a CPU controlled 'bot. We're really excited to watch the dawn of a new movement that has so much potential.

## » Speed Freak

All right, dear friends at **ODCM**, here's the deal. I stare dumbstruck at your articles on Phantasy Star Online and mutter things unconsciously like "Wow, that's cool." But strangely enough, I am also a huge company nerd who refuses to give me better than a duplicated phone line like... "I can only connect at 2.4 Kbps with an 85K modem! Fuh."

So I went to get cable, and I cry because I can't have cable and won't be able to dial in to play Phantasy Star Online. But I am overjoyed to find a LAN adapter allowing me to use cable with my Dreamcast in your mag's tech section [**ODCM #9**]. I must have it and I search everywhere for it, can for information on this godsend. I'm a gamer and a techie. I can make the Net actually tell me things instead of barking out garbage about cooking better with potato oil or voting in the next presidential election but I need to know... Zilla at DailyRadar.com seems to think that the adapter is some kind of party弄 going on in Colorado! Don't tease me. Where is it?

Mike Dunning  
Via email

Mike, Sega has announced that it will be releasing the broadband adapter, which is basically an ethernet card that replaces the built-in DC modem, to the US market in January. The \$50 part will allow you

to use your Dreamcast with a DSL or cable connection. Interestingly, Sega's ISP, SegNet, will not be offering DSL. If you want to play Sega games online using a DSL or cable connection, you'll have to sign up with a third-party ISP that offers it. But since SegNet already promises awesome speed, most people won't need to bother.

## » Gain Ground-ed

A friend of mine was searching on the Internet and came across a rumor that one of the greatest games of all time, Gain Ground, is coming to Dreamcast. I couldn't believe it so I went on the net to do some research. I found out, but to no avail. Is it just a rumor? Or is Gain Ground really coming out on DC?

And someone should develop a game based on a screen-and-paper RPG *Car Wars*. It would rock. Imagine driving around in armored cars packed to the core with weapons!

They could even throw in side missions like deliveries or something, if they want.

Ryan Farrell

farrell18@syncvora.com!edu

Hey, Ryan, it's good to hear that classic games are still remembered by DC owners. Unfortunately, a sequel or remake of *Renovation's* Gain Ground, which debuted on the Genesis in 1991, is more rumor than anything else. We haven't heard anything on this title with regard to companies working on "secret projects." But if we hear anything about it, our readers will be the first to know.

As for a "car RPG," Ripcord's upcoming *Gorka World* is being touted as a type of vehicular combat/RPG with upgradeable cars which are fully interactive. We have yet to test the game out for ourselves, but you can bet we'll be checking it out in an upcoming issue.

## » Soliloque

I keep hearing all these rumors about Sega and Nintendo forming a joint company. What does this mean and is it going to happen?

Are there any sequels coming for Jet Grind Radio or Guts Rage: Sword of the Berserk?

Are there any Mega Man or Time Crisis games coming?

Kevin Cape

Kevmcapea14@hotmail.com

While we're unsure what's actually going on behind closed doors, what's on record is that the original news story was a mis-translation of what the actual message was. In sum, the real deal was an announcement stating that a high-level executive had been hired on at Sega from a position in which he had worked with Nintendo. If you apply the "operator, operator" principle to this small story, then you get the end result of "Sega and Nintendo are working together." But for the record, Sega representatives have cleared up the question and state that there are no plans for the company to pair up with Nintendo anytime in the near future. Although the company's plans to do hand held gaming (*see CD Doctor* page 13) do give some tantalizing hints.

It's been rumored that *Jet Grind* will be receiving a sequel which will feature online multiplayer modes, but again—Sega has said nothing about it. And as for *Sword of the Berserk*, neither ASCII nor Yuke's has plans for a sequel.

ILLUSTRATIONS: NASKA.C

For now, there are no plans for any *MegaMan* games from Capcom on DC. The same goes for a *Time Crisis* title from Namco on DC. Bummer, huh? But, who knows what announcements lay around the corner, so we'll keep you informed if anything changes.

## » Original Sims

Is there any chance of Sega bringing either *Emergency Call Ambulance* or *Jambal Safari* to Dreamcast? Both these games rule in the arcade and it would totally rock if awesomeness if I could play them on my DC.

B10 Average

[DarkkLotusNINJA@aol.com](mailto:DarkkLotusNINJA@aol.com)

The news is good for all these titles even making it to DC, B10. Sega's spokespeople claim that it has to do with the technology difference between the arcade versions of *Emergency Call Ambulance* and *Jambal Safari* and the DC. Apparently, neither of the arcade titles is actually the original game on the board, but something different such as the Model 3, dual NAOMI or the mysterious Hikaru board. But Sims is still evaluating the titles for port to see if it might be worth it, so we'll definitely be writing it up in these pages if there's hope on the horizon.



This game makes San Diego's Wild Animal Park look tame.

SegaNet, Earthlink or something else, you should have no problem getting your game on across the network.

Look no further than the ODCM demo disc snuggled tightly in with this very issue, Brice! The latest demo includes Voice Over IP software and other various upgrades for your DC browsing needs.

We've never confirmed that THQ would be bringing over *Westermania 2000* to Dreamcast; we're just suggesting that that might be the wrestling title headed for DC. On the other hand, another wrestling game for DC ended up being *WWF Royal Rumble*, instead, and the company has no plans to release any more DC wrestling games beyond this. Sorry for any confusion.

We're sure as heck would like to know when *bleem!* is coming out for DC, as well. *Brice!* It's been postponed and delayed since its original release date of July 2000, and the company has been very hard to pin down in regards to specific date. Therefore, it's a wait and see situation for now. We just hope that they get it out sometime within the coming months, but we'll keep you posted.

## » Baldur's Wait

Before I first got my DC, I read in a pre-release book of some kind about *Baldur's Gate* coming to DC, but other than that, I haven't heard a peep about it! Do you know if it will be coming to DC at all? Thanks a lot.

Aaron Gresinger  
[adg13@crosswinds.net](mailto:adg13@crosswinds.net)

Bad news, Aaron! While the PC RPG phenomenon known as Blizard's *Baldur's Gate* was originally planned as one of DC's first online epics, it's since been cancelled. But, fortunately, there are other online RPGs on the way, like *Phantasy Star Online* and *FarNation*, so don't fret!

## » Kill Your Television

I have had a Dreamcast for about nine months now and I love it—except for one small thing. We have a 50-inch TV and when the system is reading everything seems fine. When the game is ready to play, about two inches of the picture is chopped off at the very bottom the left side of the screen. I assumed it had something to do with the projection TV, but when I hooked it up to the bedroom TV (22 inch) it did the same thing. Is this a system flaw? Every game I own for DC does this. Any help in explaining this phenomenon would be appreciated.

Jeffrey J.jones2@att.net

We're unsure if the problem you're having is stemming from your system or from using the system on a projection TV. We've played our DCs on big-screen televisions, but never on screens larger than 40 inches (we'd like to remind you, by the way, that it's okay to have friends who own smaller TVs than yours). You may want to check with Sega's tech support line ([800-SOFA-HELP](http://800-SOFA-HELP)) for help or the matter as it might be something with the projection TV itself. If you have a smaller screen, of course, is to send your trusty 50-inch controller to do your shooting for you.

## » Trigger Happy

Does the ModCatz DreamBlaster lightning work for Silent Scope on Dreamcast, or do you need to use the original controller? Or will some third party peripheral maker create a whole new gizmo?

[RZDP4@erols.com](mailto:RZDP4@erols.com)

Unfortunately, RED, none of the DC lightning, licensed or not, work with Silent Scope. In fact, Silent Scope is not a lightning shooter in the House of the Dead 2 sense. Its arcade counterpart used a specialty midi sniper peripheral that has no real equal in land of console attachments, so you'll have to depend on your trusty OC controller to do your shooting for you.



## » A New Chapter

How many chapters of Shennme are there going to be for DC? Somebody told me there were going to be 20, but that sounds like too many. What's the real deal?

I know almost nothing about *SagaNet* except that you can play games online and send email. Are you able to surf the internet too, just like on a computer with another ISP?

When is *ESPN Baseball Tonight* coming out? It was supposed to come out in April, then August, then November. Now it's going to be released?

In DCDM #6, there was an article about THQ's plans to release *Westermania 2000* for DC in the fall. I haven't seen it yet, and I was wondering if there are still plans to release the game? And when is *bleem!* ever going to come out?

Brice Beck  
[bb\\_tocool23@yahoo.com](mailto:bb_tocool23@yahoo.com)

Will an updated version of the Web Browser 2.0 ever come out? And if so what will it's capabilities?

In DCDM #6, there was an article about THQ's plans to release *Westermania 2000* for DC in the fall. I haven't seen it yet, and I was wondering if there are still plans to release the game? And when is *bleem!* ever going to come out?

Shennme is a play-it-savvy sort of series according to the game's creator, Yu Suzuki. Surprisingly, every "chapter" of the game needs to be up as an stand-alone product, but the grand plan is to produce 16 complete chapters. But don't get the number wrong, Eric. "16 chapters" doesn't necessarily translate into 16 separate games. In fact, it's rumored that Shennme would incorporate multiple chapters rather than one single chapter (like *Shennme: Chapter 1—Yokosuka*). Sorry if this is confusing, but this is basically where the series stands. Hope it answers your question.

*SagaNet* is a fully functioning ISP with email, Internet

browsing abilities and online gaming. No virtual store is left unturned if you have it and you can use *SagaNet* as your primary ISP.

According to Konami, *ESPN Baseball Tonight* has been postponed until next year, perhaps to coincide with the start up of the baseball season. We'll keep you updated.

## » Chat Boom

When will the new DC microphone (and long distance system) come out in the US, sold separately from Seaman?

When will 18 Wheeler American ProTrucker be coming out?

I heard that in the upcoming *Soul Reaver 2*, you get to suck blood instead of souls. Is this true?

Cory  
[cory111@hotmail.com](mailto:cory111@hotmail.com)

The DC microphone should be out in stores in a separate package from Seaman right now!

Can't wait to get *Seaman*? Read our full preview of *18 Wheeler* in Coming Soon and then start saving. The game hits stores in just another month or two.

That's just crazy oldskool vampire propaganda you've been hearing, Cory! *SR2* has Raziel sucking souls, like always, so don't believe the hype.

Four out of five reviewers say that *Reavers* taste better than blood, anyway.

## » The College Try

I have been playing Dreamcast for quite a while now, and I have to say that NFL 2K1 is the best football game I have ever played. Is it overhyped? I don't know. From what I seen of *Madden 2001* on PS2, NFL 2K1 blows it out of the water. But here's my question: Is Visual Concepts ever going to make a college football game? If they are capable of producing a game as great as NFL 2K1, surely they could do it again with a college game.

Any they having trouble obtaining permission from the NCAAs? I work at a software store here in Louisville and have already been asked by at least five or six people about a future NCAA game. Same goes with NBA 2K1 and a possible college basketball game. Just wondering if you have heard anything about future college sports games. Thanks, and keep up the good work!

Brent Wilton  
[kyky@juno.com](mailto:kyky@juno.com)

At this moment in time, we're sad to report that Sega has no plans in the immediate future for any college sports games via Visual Concepts, but this isn't to say that another third-party publisher doesn't have some plans in the works that they're not currently talking about. We just haven't heard a thing regarding NCAA games on Dreamcast, which seems a shame since they're just as popular as pro sports games. It's a wait and see situation, Brent, so stay tuned.

## » A Little To The Write

A little goes a long way, and a lot goes even further. So, get gordoin, and send DCDM all your files of Dreamcast fancy in email or snail mail form and get your questions answered. Wanna know what Yu Suzuki eats for breakfast? Ever wondered why Sonic wears shoes but no pants? Can't quite figure out why we run so many freakin' pictures of Yu Naik in every issue? Then write to us. We may have the answer. And if we don't...then...well, there don't. But don't let that stop you. Send it to: DCDM, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Call us techno-snobs, but email is absolutely fabulous at: [dcmag@imagemedia.com](mailto:dcmag@imagemedia.com)

Revealed: The Rock is really Rob Schneider (formerly SNU) in his movies.



February 2001 Official Dreamcast Magazine 11

DC FAST FORWARD

# Evolution or Revolution?

**Dreamcast takes two giant leaps into the future**

There were a few surprises at Sega's recent Executive Games Summit. But our eyebrows raised the highest when Charles Bellfield, VP of Corporate & Marketing Communications, gestured at a Dreamcast and said, "**Will we ship a box like that in two years? No.**"

**Vikes. Is it all over for Dreamcast? Not at all—"The Dreamcast platform remains central to our plans going forward," says Bellfield.**

Confused? Don't be. Sega is simply announcing the next step in the evolution of its system. "Sega's future is all about delivering content," said Bellfield, which is one of the reasons the company is looking to develop for hand-held platforms (see related story, next page). To enable the company to deliver its games on a whole array of systems, the Dreamcast itself will soon acquire an inexpensive multiplatform architecture.

What does this mean? Three things. First, the Dreamcast architecture will be integrated into a one- or two-chip piece of technology, which can then be licensed and slotted into any number of consumer devices—like DVD players or even PCs.

**Second, the company wants to take its current "free system" business model to the next level.** Right now, you can get a rebate for the cost of the Dreamcast by subscribing to SegaNet for 18 months. In the future, says Bellfield, "You can think of it like a cable box or digital satellite dish. You'll pay to get the content, but you don't pay for the hardware." So Sega will be able to afford to give Dreamcast technology to anyone who wants it, thanks to saving a fortune by reducing the system to a couple of Frito-sized chips.

**Third, and this may be the most exciting part, "The technology of Dreamcast is designed to scale easily," says Bellfield.** Translation? Since the underlying Dreamcast technology—NEC graphics

## THIS MONTH

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Senior Sega official Charles Bellfield told DC that future iterations of the Dreamcast system will likely be integrated into a one- or two-chip piece of technology, which can be licensed and slotted into any number of consumer devices—such as DVD players.



# "Sega's future is all about delivering content."

Charles Bellfield



hardware, Hitachi CPU, and RAM—can all be improved upon in future iterations, it will be. And does this mean that a Dreamcast 2 is in the offing? "No," he says. "That implies the old, console way of thinking, and we're simply moving beyond that." Developers will continue to use the same unique development environments, APIs, graphics libraries, etc., so there won't be the learning curve of a new system—they'll just be able to get more out of Dreamcast.

And us gamers will suddenly be playing on a more powerful gaming system.

And will current Dreamcast owners be able to play games written for upgraded, don't-call-it-DC2-hardware? Forward compatibility (playing new games on old systems—as opposed to backwards compatibility, or playing old games on new systems) isn't a reality yet, but it could be within the realm of possibility.

In short, the future for Dreamcast has never looked brighter. If Sega manages to proliferate Dreamcast technology into multiple devices, from DVD players to set-top boxes to who knows, we may see the Dreamcast become the first console to break out of the traditional mode and become its own multiarchitecture gaming platform. And that...well, that would be really cool.

## PARTNER UP

So, just who will Sega partner with to bring the Dreamcast architecture to a wider audience? The company isn't talking, but we can at least tell you who it isn't partnering with—Sony, which has its own small game division with a combo gameplayer/DVD player out now; Panasonic, which has made a deal with Nintendo to include GameCube technology in its DVD players; and Toshiba, which is already in bed with Sony thanks to a deal regarding joint manufacture of PS2 chips. Which leaves Thompson/RCA, JVC and Samsung as the biggest brands who could conceivably decide to add gaming to their DVD player offerings.

## Sega teams will develop for multiple platforms... Relax, it's not what you think

IT'S OFFICIAL. SEGA'S TOP DESIGN TEAMS ARE GETTING READY to develop for multiple platforms. But, before you go unplugging your Dreamcast and getting ready to put it in the closet, consider this. The multiple platforms don't include any other videogame consoles—Dreamcast is central to Sega's content development. Instead, according to Sega, the company is looking to deploy its intellectual property (lawyer talk for its great characters like Sonic, etc.) on handheld platforms.

In other words, Sega games could appear on handheld gaming systems (no one mentioned Game Boy or Game Boy Advance, but frankly, they didn't have to), mobile phones (the company already has a deal with Motorola to deploy games on some of its new phones), and palm-top devices that are now powerful enough to play emulated or native versions of Sega's 16bit hits like *Sonic 2* or *Shinobi*.

## Alexander: The Road to Persia

FANS OF STRATEGY ON DREAMCAST SHOULD REJOICE: A PROMISING NEW strategy game is heading to DC in Japan...and here's hoping it makes it over! As young Alexander, you'll be expanding your empire towards Persia—and it features several twists on the standard strategy theme. First, deploying the right troops with the right general for each given battlefield situation is crucial to victory. Second, the game features tons of animation and story, and it's managed to create an incredibly cast of characters. You can only control Alexander—other characters are controlled only by their own individual AI—but you can move the camera around during the realtime battles to keep abreast of the situation across the entire battlefield.

Will we be calling this game Alexander the Great? Almost definitely. And will it conquer America? Who knows? Check back for more soon.

So what does this anime girl have to do with Alexander? The game's being developed in Japan, so of course it has been given a Japanese look by the developer.



# Japanese Envy

Creating a new world from the ground up is easy with Dream Studio. As long as you live in Japan.

**QUESTION:** What's Japanese, cooler than anything, and not—repeat not!—scheduled for US release anytime soon? *Dream Studio*, Sega's new 3D adventure/RPG maker. The system lets you design characters, create 3D environments, and develop time- and event-based scenarios so you can take a swipe at making the next *Grandia*. Once you're done, you can save your scenarios to VMU or upload them for others to play. So when's this awesome RPG-making tool coming to the US? Not any time soon, unfortunately. Because the system is so text-based, localizing it for US release would be a major undertaking. We're still hopeful, though, that this game genesis tool will ship in the States sometime in the next year. Maybe. We hope.



Dream Studio's text-based interface would be a nightmare to localize for US release.



## SEPARATED AT BIRTH



Resident Evil's Claire That '70s Show's Donna

Chris' private (now public) and unwholesome obsession with the admittedly gorgeous star of *That '70s Show* spurred this month's choice for Separated at Birth. We couldn't help but notice how much Donna looks like *Resident Evil*'s resident babe, Claire Redfield. Here're a few points of similarity:

- They both have red hair.
- They both wear chokers.
- They are both disarmingly sexy.
- They both kill (or drink) zombies.
- They really look like Chris (or at least, they do in Chris's fantasyland—we think).
- Their luscious lips-shaped EXACTLY the same way!—just keep to be kissed.

## DREAM ON

GAMES WE WISH WERE ON DC

### COLUMNS SEGA 1993

Okay, Sega, this should be no-brainer! The original Columns is acknowledged to be so good, it's going to be one of the chosen titles on the Sega Dream Pack—but what we want now is a complete update for Dreamcast. An update complete with...where we say it...INTERNET MULTIPLAYER. If it ain't online, it ain't our bag. Booyah. Note to Sega: Make this happen.



## HOT LIST

WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE ...

### We want it badly:

- Guilty Gear X
- Sonic Adventure
- Shenmue 2
- Outrigger
- P.S.O.

### You want it badly:

- Shenmue 2
- DragonBall Z
- DragonBall Z
- DragonBall Z
- DragonBall Z

### We all hope & pray for:

- NIGHTS 2
- Soul Calibur 2
- Panzer Dragoon Saga 2
- Streets of Rage 4
- Herzog Zwei 2

### You're dying to play with:

- DVD player
- Zip drive
- MP3 "solution"
- Broadband adapter
- Evan

## TOP 10

BASED ON SALES

BEST SELLING TITLES, NOV. 2000

1. SEGA SPORTS NBA 2K1	SEGA
2. SHENMUE	SEGA
3. SEGA SPORTS NFL 2K1	SEGA
4. CRAZY TAXI	SEGA
5. TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2	ACTIVISION
6. JET GRIND RADIO	SEGA
7. READY TO RUMBLE: ROUND 2	MIDWAY
8. QUAKE III ARENA	SEGA
9. SONIC ADVENTURE	SEGA
10. SEGA SPORTS NFL 2K	SEGA

## Gaga for Segagaga?

Weirdest. Idea. Ever.

In a bizarre case of art imitating life, Sega Hitmaker (best known for *Virtua Tennis*), is planning to release a management sim for Dreamcast. In this game, titled (we kid you not) Segagaga, you'll play the head of Sega as the company attempts to take over the gaming business. Sold online only in Japan, don't expect to see it over here—although if it does make the journey, we expect Peter Moore to do the strategy guide.

A timeless legend. An epic adventure.

# Record Of Lodoss War

Dreamcast

*"Record Of Lodoss War...  
will definitely satisfy  
Dreamcast owning  
Diablo fans"*

[www.gamespot.com](http://www.gamespot.com)

*"Record Of Lodoss War...  
looks and sounds  
brilliant on the  
Dreamcast"*

[www.igndc.com](http://www.igndc.com)



Experience the world of Record of Lodoss War up close and personal in an epic 3D action/RPG only for Sega Dreamcast. Take control of a mysterious warrior from the past, resurrected to save the future, on a colossal quest filled with pulse-pounding action and high adventure. Join forces with popular characters from the Lodoss universe and combat hundreds of vicious enemies with dozens of spectacular spells and customizable weapons.

**MATURE**  
Animated Blood  
Animated Violence

**ESP**  
ENTERTAINMENT SPOTLIGHT

**角川書店**

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# Calling All Dreamcasts

## DreamCall: Use the Internet to screw the phone company

**NOBODY LIKES THE PHONE COMPANIES.** We don't, at any rate. Which is why we're kinda excited about DreamCall, a new feature of Browser 2.6 (which comes, by the way, on the GD-ROM included with this issue).

DreamCall enables you to use your Dreamcast's Internet connection in combination with the Dreamcast microphone (currently available with Seaman, soon to be available separately) to make free Dreamcast-to-Dreamcast calls anywhere in the world. Got a little friend in Pakistan? Call her for free.

DreamCall also lets you make calls to the outside world (that is, regular people on regular phones) using your Dreamcast. Unfortunately, these conversations will cost you a steep \$4 a minute—but then, there's no long distance fee, so you still might be saving money.

How's the quality? Not too bad, although there's a slight delay and a tiny bit of distortion. We'd rate the quality much higher than, say, Houston-to-space shuttle communications, but lower than that of regular phone or digital cellular. It's more like analog cellular quality.

Of course, you'll probably have to email your partner to set up a time to call, since your Dreamcast needs to be on, online and running the browser to receive calls—unless your game is programmed to monitor for DreamCall activity, which none are—but what the technology lacks in spontaneity, it more than makes up for in free-ness.

And predictably, the DreamCall technology will be showing up in games soon. *Alien Front Online* (see Coming Soon, pg. 56) will be the first title to use it.

With Sega's new DreamCall software and a DC microphone, you can make long-distance calls to other Dreamcasters for free. The software is built into the new Browser 2.6—which just happens to be included on this month's demo disc.



DreamCall uses the Seaman microphone to make phone calls over the Internet. A separately packaged mike is in the works.



## What's Your Type?

From horoscopes to horoscopes

**Why do so many** games tell you the blood types of the characters? It's a Japanese thing in Japan, people look at blood types the way we look at horoscopes here in the US. According to the Japanese system, your blood type determines your personality.

Here's a handy index to help you understand how blood types are used in games.

### Type A

**Pluses:** Honest, trustworthy, hard-working, loyal, law-abiding

**Minuses:** Finicky, hard to please, sneaky, unstable when drunk

### Type B

**Pluses:** Adventurous, passionate, friendly, independent  
**Minuses:** Lazy, indiscreet, unpredictable, bossy

### Type AB

**Pluses:** Sensitive, powerful, friendly, well organized  
**Minuses:** Too proud, a playboy, vain, hard to get to know

### Type O

**Pluses:** Strong, athletic, sexy, forthright, very ambitious

(The most common type in Japan is A. In the US, it's O.)





# Nice Package!

**My god, it's full of Genesis games...**

Starting in January, Sega's going to deliver something that console buyers haven't seen since the 16-bit days: a pack-in game. Well, twelve of them, actually. Sorta.

Here's the deal. Starting in January, there will be a new Dreamcast retail package available, the **Smash Pack Bundle**. Although all of the details aren't fully fleshed out, it looks like it will cost \$169—and it's going to come with one of the most awesome pack-ins ever.

On the Smash Pack disc will be **SegaSwirl**, **Browser 2.6** (also found on this disc, FYI), **Virtua Cop 2** (with light gun support!), and—get this—ten emulated Sega Genesis classics! Sega has been offering pay-to-play emulated Genesis games via its online network in Japan, but these will be complete games on the disc. No word on whether



GOLDEN AXE



SHINOBI

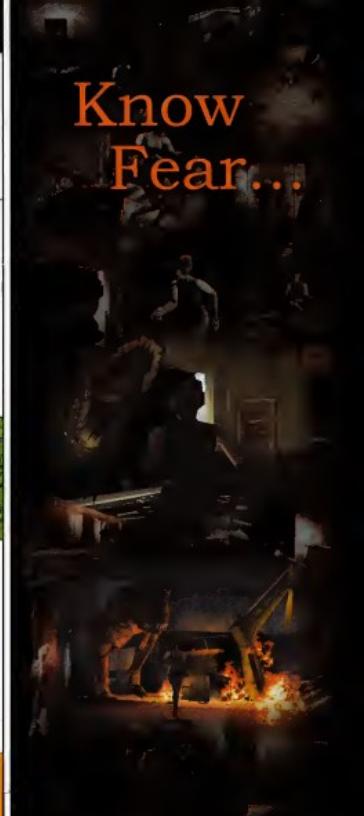


PHANTASY STAR 2

or not we'll be able to get our greedy little hands on the technology so we can slide you a couple of free Genesis games with each issue, but we're working on it.

The games included will be **Sonic the Hedgehog**, **Altered Beast**, **Streets of Rage 2**, **Golden Axe**, **Vector Man**, **Revenge of Shinobi**, **Columns**, **Phantasy Star II**, **Shining Force**, and **Wrestle War**. Holy crap! That's a lotta good Genesis games.

Although Sega is being coy about plans for releasing the Smash Pack as a stand-alone disc, we'll eat our spuds if the disc, or something very similar, doesn't come along soon after the Smash Pack Bundle is released.



CAPCOM  
capcom.com

# Shenmue: Woo-hoo!



Ryo and friends make their official US debut with a huge party—ODCM crashes it

**TO MARK SHENMUE'S OFFICIAL** release, Sega went straight to the top: Shanghai 1930, San Francisco's swankiest and most exclusive Chinese eatery. Fittingly, this restaurant was also the site where Sega first revealed the existence of Shenmue way back in 1998.

The international videogame digerati turned out in force for the event, where they were wined, dined and entertained by live jazz and a troupe of traditional Japanese taiko drummers (who were actually playing outside and weren't technically part of the event—but cool nonetheless), and more Sega staffers, local celebs, and game journos resplendent in logo-ed T's and nappy jeans than you could shake a stick at.

The highlight of the evening was when Shenmue creator/god Yu Suzuki himself picked up the mike and gave a speech, about 'mue's development and his expectations for the game in the US market. (In brief: He hopes we like it.)

Sega President Peter Moore spoke to the crowd too, about the incredible success of Dreamcast so far and his high hopes for a brilliant future.

With games like Shenmue in hand, trust us: the only worry that Sega should have is making sure it has enough inventory in stock to keep up with the demand!



**The highlight of the evening was when creator/god Yu Suzuki himself took the mike**





1 Head of Corporate Communications Charles Bellfield looks tough 2 Bassist bears a surprising resemblance to Shemmu's Chai, does he not? 3 Sega boss Peter Moore, clearly happy about Shenmue 4 Partygoers take time out to sample the game 5 Now, that's a serious Sega fan!



Dreamcast.com

February 2000 Official Dreamcast

# Will You Survive the Horror...



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ARCADE ACTION

# Quarter Pounders

... and no cheese at Sega's private arcade show

**SEGA SHOWED OFF ITS LATEST** goodies at a recent private arcade show in Tokyo, and we (or at least our correspondents) were there. Most impressive game? Probably *Air Trix*, Sega's next-generation arcade skater. Using a hardware setup like *Top Skater*, it adds serious vert skills and a lot more tricks for an incredible punch. Coming home? Maybe. Maybe.

Definitely coming home? The rad-looking *Samba De Amigo 2000*. It sports our favorite 2D/3D monkey along with tons and tons of new songs, which feature a Caribbean flavor this time. So far, there's no word on US songs this time around, but we're hoping against hope that "Who Let the Dogs Out" will not be among them.

Bottom line? Sega's still got it, and it looks like it may come home...

*Samba 2000* features much more difficult action, including all sorts of new moves and acrobatics designed to knock you to death in the arcade, at home, or even all by yourself, just thinking about them. In short, the world's best party game is about to go totally off the hook.



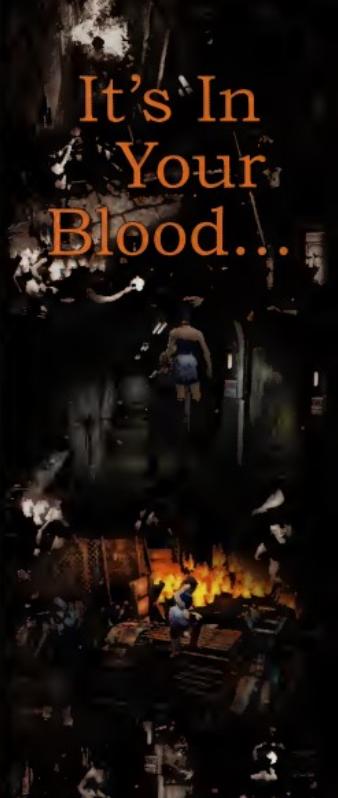
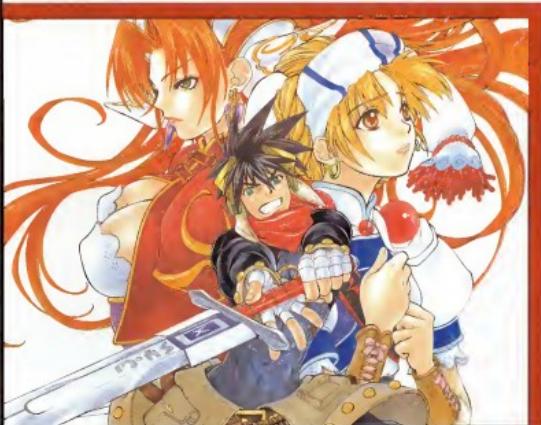
Okay, so first check out the graphics, and then bow before the might of Sega's arcade game designers. *Air Trix* looks like it is going to totally change the world. The only question: will its deluxe hardware control scheme (an actual skateboard) allow the play to translate to the home, or will this be an arcade experience only? Time will tell.

## Hockey on Dreamcast?

Believe it, baby. Maybe...

It's not on Dreamcast yet, but *Sports Jam* will be headed there soon if there's any justice in the world. Sega's latest arcade classic features arcade takes on eight different sports (including hockey, soccer, golf, football, basketball, biking, basketball and tennis) on over twelve stages. The game uses a simple two-button control scheme, and is designed to test your accuracy at every sport. A two-player mode is included (of course), and since the game comes on a GD-ROM—even in the arcade—we're hoping it will be an easy port to Dreamcast. We'll have more on this promising arcade romp as soon as we can pry more info out of Sega.





# What Grand(ia) Voice Acting!

**ODCM gets the skinny on good vocals**

**One of the best things about Grandia II is the fantastic voice acting.** How'd Ubisoft do it, when the standard of voice-overs rarely has risen much beyond the laughable? Well, they got some help from the pros. They cast Kristin Zimmerman as Captain in the original Resident Evil? Hiring a professional director helps. **ODCM** took the old Corporate Jet (well, technically, it was Ultron's corporate jet) to get the goods from Grandia II's voice director, Kris Zimmerman—who's probably best known for her work on Metal Gear Solid.

**DDCM: What's the main role of a voice director?**

Kris Zimmerman: I get performances out of the actors once they're hired. And I help cast and choose actors for the game. With that comes what some people would call producing—coordinating, setting up, budgets, etc. But I don't call myself a voice producer by trade; I prefer to refer to it as working with the actors.

You've worked in a lot of fields: which do you prefer?

**Cartoons? Games? TV? Why?**

It's all very similar. My skill is the same regardless of the project. Games tend to get done quicker as they're more concise. This allows us to focus on what we're doing and to become completely absorbed in the story while we're working on the project. Cartoons tend to be slower over months. For Grandia II, we did eight sessions, which is a lot of time to spend in a studio in cartoon land. Games are more intense... in a good way.

**What were some of your impressions of videogames when you first began doing work on them, versus how you view videogames now?**

Games are so much better now. Story content has gotten much better. It is much more story-oriented now. There aren't as many arbitrary choices. It used to be you had to say something fifteen times depending on what the player did. Now, it's more linear. You can tell a story through the games, but the ways you can get through them are much more interesting, and not as repetitive. [Games are] much more complex now. The largest game

I've ever done was Metal Gear Solid. When I got the script, I thought it was one giant pile to hand out to all the actors. But then I realized that the plot was so good, there was just one copy. With Grandia II, I think through it is so interesting. I really liked the story. What's funny is that I have a 12-year-old son and he couldn't care less about the cartoons I've done. The minute his friends realized I worked on these games, I became his hero.

**What videogame voice-over direction have you previously been involved in?**

Metal Gear Solid, Star Trek Voyager, Elite Force, Deep Space 9, The Fallen, Tenchi, Akira, The Sydney Olympics, Rivenant, Heretic II and Zork: Grand Inquisitor.

**The RPG fanbase is one of the pickiest subsets of video game fandom. Have you found this worrisome?**

**Did it affect decisions you made about Grandia II?**

I know I am a fan of RPGs, and I try to make people available for my role. At that point, the story and the timeframe for recording was adequate, so we were going to get a good game. And we had that with Grandia II.

**RPG localizations suffer from time and budget constraints. Have you run into any problems?**

Sound localization is an expensive thing. The studio is very expensive. The actors are expensive. And the actors only work a set number of hours per payment. Without knowing the language, it's difficult to know exactly how much they participate or how clear they're going to be once we start. The difficult thing is trying to figure out how to budget the actor's time. They had an aggressive schedule, but we met it. They had the editors working immediately on the raw data. It was a massive team effort.

**What's your opinion on voice acting in videogames?**

It's gotten so much better. I know that when my son started playing games, I was appalled at how bad it was. Now, it's truly remarkable how good it is. I believe, I think companies like Ubi Soft are starting to listen to the fans and beginning to investigate how to do it right. And not only to investigate, but to succeed.

**RESIDENT EVIL 3  
NEMESIS**

Dreamcast

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# **FORBIDDEN GAMES** of



**ODCM UNCOVERS THE SHOCKING TRUTH: YOU**

# N JAPAN

**W**arning: There are certain games us Western gamers were never meant to see. Games so Japanese that they violate all import requirements for cuteness and weirdness. Games based on concepts so foreign to traditional US gamers' tastes that for even suggesting that a company publish one over here, your average product acquisition guy would probably be given three months sick leave (or be quietly asked to clean out his desk). ¶ But Japanese gamers aren't insane. They just enjoy some genres that you probably never even knew existed. But what do you expect from a country where people play golf on top of skyscrapers, go angling in glorified swimming pools, and where the number one best-selling Dreamcast title—ever—is *Seaman*: a game in which you interact with a moody fish who's even better than your therapist at telling you why you suck. ¶ Over the next four pages, we'll take you through the best examples of a whole new gaming world...which you'll probably never see anywhere else. Will any of these games ever come to the US? Probably not. Should they? A tough call. We don't like being denied any choices, and if Infogrames will bring out *Pen Pen*, surely someone would be willing to release *Tokyo Bus Guide*. Anyway, without further ado, get ready to take a look at exactly what you've been missing..

AREN'T SUPPOSED TO PLAY THESE DREAMCAST TITLES!

## CASE STUDY #1

DATING 

Simply-animated dating interaction games have been popular in Japan since the days of the SNES console. They mostly revolve around a male hero (i.e., you) trying to win the affections of a certain girl, or, if you're lucky, a series of girls.

The courting procedure is usually undertaken by selecting options from various menus and watching the results play through onscreen. For example, in *Memories Off*, there's a point where you spot your 'love interest' a few cars away on the train. You're provided with two options: should you shout at her, or go and sit next to her? Of course, you don't need us to tell you that the latter would be the more charming maneuver. It doesn't sound very thrilling, does it? But in a reserved and conservative society, this sort of game provides light-hearted 'practice' in charming the opposite sex for adolescent would-be romancers. Plus, they're usually very funny, working like interactive versions of more light-hearted anime.



**MEMORIES OFF** Lots of girls, wearing sailor suits. What more can you say, really?



## TOKIMEMI MEMORIAL

Tokimemi Memorial takes a slightly different approach to the dating genre, but it still manages to capture the same appealing elements. After getting into the exclusive Karameki High School, you meet a friend from your childhood named Fujisaki Shiori. She is in the same class as you are, and during your three years at the school, you strive to impress her—and ultimately, to win her love. To do this, you must excel in academic areas and in sporting prowess...which means that you'll have to go a lot further than simply flirting a bit and making an awkward pass at the school dance.



**White Illumination** Date girls in the upper-crust sections of Japanese cities...if that sort of thing is your bag.



あつ もう大丈夫！  
あはつ ちょっとの間だけだつたね。

**Photo Memories** Yet another inscrutable title hides yet another standard date 'em up.

In a reserved and conservative society, this sort of game provides light-hearted 'practice' in charming the opposite sex for adolescent would-be romancers.

## TOKYO BUS GUIDE



As a bus driver in—you guessed it—Tokyo, it's your goal in life to be the best damn bus driver ever to grace the streets of Japan. To achieve this title, you'll have to be pointlessly rude to customers and occasionally hit the pavement, sending old women collapsing into the aisles... no, that would *San Francisco Bus Guide*. Instead, you must drive under the speed limit, indicate before turning, and be polite. The result is amazingly addictive and very underrated in terms of complexity and interaction. Japanese gamers were so thrilled with the game that Sega has actually taken up the cause, and is in the process of converting *Tokyo Bus Guide* into a full-fledged arcade title replicate with driver's seat.

### CASE STUDY #2

# WORK

Japan is a nation seemingly obsessed with work. Well, that's not exactly true—they just do a lot of it. All the time. Absenteeism is unheard of, overtime is mandatory (office employees sometimes sleep at their desks after working until 4am), and people have even been known to work themselves to death.

Maybe that's why games that simulate employment are so immensely popular there. And we don't mean loony knock-offs like *Crazy Taxi*; we mean accurate simulations. The smash hit arcade and console title *Densha De Go!* for example, enables players to drive a commuter train around Japan. Even *Shenmue* provides a little work-related fun, enabling you to stack crates in a warehouse.

Although they sound ridiculous, these work sims are surprisingly therapeutic, enabling you to indulge in careers you'd never usually dream of. Just don't expect to be paid for playing.



### Winning Post

Spend a day at the races in true Marx Brothers fashion. Train your own Derby horse and pit it for some serious racing action. You'll win money and kudos if you manage to get the formula right.



### Let's Make a Soccer Team

All budding chairman can hone their skills in the J-League. You'll be responsible for staffing your office by choosing everything from a secretary to the color of your team's jersey in order to build the perfect group of soccer players and earn the cup.

### Densha De Go! 2

Chugging over Japan in trains has never been so much fun. The original in the arcade was so successful that the *Densha* series has spread to piloting planes.

## LET'S MAKE A PRO BASEBALL TEAM



*Let's Make a Pro Baseball Team* goes pretty far into the nether regions of an often mysterious world. You're able to hire and fire everyone from secretaries to players to executives; you're also in charge of overseeing the team, tending to the club's finances, choosing the equipment—you can even get involved in stadium acquisition and development. Everything, basically. But to keep it out of the PC-dullard stat-based realm, Sega decided that a "massive-head" mode was essential for the players, as were the top bright and cute graphics.

# FORBIDDEN GAMES



## DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION

This home version of the arcade favorite (which East-born experts use merely to practise on for their proper arcade showdowns) comes with its own dancing controller—a floor mat with four arrows on it.

Gameplay is simple; just choose a tune, and then, as arrow symbols appear onscreen, step on the corresponding arrows on the mat to make your onscreen character dance like a bubbly gumbop star. The more precise you are with your groove, the more points you get. As a bonus, you'll shed a few pounds.

## Super Producers

In this music/work hybrid that enables you to manage a J-Pop star, you'll be able to audition potential singing starlets from a group—and then managing her whole career is up to you from there on out. Will she be a hyper hip-hop cutie or a traditional pop superstar? You choose her music, her look and her video work. Do it right and you'll land on the music charts.



## POP'N MUSIC

*Pop'n Music* is as simple as your average pop star, but more fraught with tension than the OCD office at deadline (and that's pretty damn tense). All that is required is that you tap the appropriate button at the same time that it's indicated on the screen.

Fronted by super-furry animals, *Pop'n Music* is a top package, especially with the optional controller, which is a trapezium-shaped block full of buttons. The frenetic button pushing may wear a little thin, but its fast-paced fun is unbeatable. As with *Dance Dance Revolution*, this is a party game by definition, and a splendid one at that. It's just too J-Pop-oriented and downright strange to ever see a release in the West, though, which is unfortunate.



## Puyo Puyo Da!

Dance with the Puyo Puyo crew! In this Bust-A-Groove for the puzzle fan set, you'll use classic combo to bury your light-footed opponents.

## Sonic Team PowerPlay

A game with no visuals soothes your soul; it's an especially great game if you happen to be blind. We hear.

## Real Sound 2

right. It's more of a soundtrack than a real game, which roughly translates into "you're lucky if the import store even carries this."

## CASE STUDY #4

# MUSIC

Since Konami's DJ-ing sim *Beatmania* hit Japanese arcades, rhythm-action games have exploded in popularity—and the craze shows no sign of abating. The genre is probably popular for the same reason karaoke is so huge in Japan...it gives usually-restrained office workers the chance to show off in front of their friends in a semi-controlled environment. (It's also, we can attest after having spent some time in dancing arcades in Shinjuku, a great way to break the ice with the ladies.) Of all the crazy Japanese genres we've covered so far, this is probably the most accessible to US gamers, with titles like *PaRappa the Rappa* and *Dance Dance* doing reasonably well on PlayStation, and *Samba De Amigo* drawing a good amount of attention on DC. In this section, you'll find examples of several more musical oddities which might just tickle your aural fancy. Will they ever come to the US? Well, never underestimate music to bring gaming nations together.

## CASE STUDY #4

# MANGA

It would take a whole book to explain the possible origins of manga and the many definitions you could put to the term. However the modern use of 'manga' as a catch-all name for Japanese comics has been around since the 1960s, when legendary artist Osamu Tezuka created *Astro Boy*—the story of a cute android crime fighter and his mad professor inventor.

Since then, manga and its animated equivalent, anime, have grown into national obsessions—with books, animated series' and animated films aimed at everyone from schoolboys to housewives. Shoji Kawamori's popular *Macross* was one of the first major manga titles to become a game, released on Nintendo's Famicom (known as the NES in the US) in the 1980s. From then on, many generations have seen manga and anime franchises achieve international success.

Dreamcast examples include *Gundam*, *Kikaiishi* (Tech Rancer in the US), *Bangaihō*, *Record of Lodoss War* and *Sakura Taisen*. Most include lengthy anime cutscenes, which is cool if you enjoy Japanese animation.



### Nadesico the Mission

An attractive outer-space strategy game based on the popular anime, for people who consider themselves to be savvy armchair generals of some sort or another.



### Aa! Megamisama Quiz

Quiz-tastic arcade-to-DC port featuring the lovely leading ladies of the cult favorite anime and manga series Aa! Megamisama (Aa! My Goddess in the US).

The game is a mixture of CG and animated events influenced by how you answers various series of questions asked by Belldandy and Co. The big draw for fans will be the inclusion of all-new characters not found in either the anime or the manga. This is definitely an otakuish sort of event.



### Langrisser Millennium

Though technically not spawned from a manga or anime, the Langrisser series is beloved amongst the audience for both mediums mainly due to the series' strong storyline and character designs by renowned manga artist Satoshi Urushihara (Chirality, etc.)...with the exception of Millennium.

All five installments in the series have been strategy RPGs with a concentration on massive battles similar to the Shining Force series, but with even more depth and skill required.

Manga and anime are national obsessions: with books, animated series and films aimed at everyone from schoolboys to housewives.



### **SAKURA TAISEN**

The *Sakura* series is one of the most precious and well-respected brands Sega has in Japan, and *Sakura Taisen* & 2 are the remakes of Saturn classics. In typical manga style, you join a secret organisation fighting against All Evil (hmmmm, quite an ambitious remit). There are tactical battles aplenty, but these are some of the oddest you'll ever fight.

You command the Hanagumi Clan of female warriors in mech suits, and the way in which you interact with them determines the success of your campaign. Points are given for saying the right things at the right time—Le, encouraging them during battle instead of hitting on them. The manga theme is handled by Fujishima Kosuke, who has also worked on the excellent *Aa! My Goddess* manga series. It may prove impenetrable to most Westerners, though.

Leave your enemies  
shaken AND stirred

# MAX STEEL™

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All screen shots are from the Sega Dreamcast game console.



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FROM  
GEEK  
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ODCM

investigates  
how videogames  
courted the  
underground,  
hijacked the  
mainstream  
and never  
looked back.

**Dark bedrooms. Sweaty control pads.**  
Unwashed sweatpants can go on and on about videogaming's sordid past, but it's a story that already been well-documented (and—erm—Chris would rather not reprise his misspent youth). These days our favorite pastime suffers no such hang-ups, having undergone a gargantuan transformation from nerdy, reclusive hobby into billion-dollar, Hollywood-dwarfing entertainment behemoth.

How did it all happen? Was it back in 1992 when a million copies of Sonic hit stores nationwide on 'Sonic Tuesday'? Or was it when the British too-hip-to-see-over-its-own-pevils lifestyle/culture mag *The Face* slapped Lara Croft on its cover? It's almost hard to believe today, when PlayStation 2 shortages make the national news and Dreamcast is *Time Magazine's* Product of the Year, how recently the game industry was treated like the forgotten stepchild of entertainment media.

But what price do we pay for acceptance? Is the culture we grew up with selling out? Are games that've been designed for the mainstream—rather than geeks—even worth playing? Well, the answers are a bit more complicated than the questions. Fact: Videogames are no longer the exclusive province of those of us with Palm Pilots on our belts and Mountain Dew on our sweatpants. Fact: Far from merely borrowing from pop culture, games are now starting to dictate it. And which company is leading the way? Fact: Sega. This company's Japanese developers seem to have more style in their VMU games than some other consoles have in their entire libraries. So join us as we attempt to nail the major trends at work that have dragged videogaming from the bedroom-dwelling squarol, so well-documented in '80s and '90s media, into the sophisticated splendour of 21st century Dreamcast living... .

Jet Grind Radio's  
lively graf punk hits the  
target geeks dig chicks  
and games.



Once upon a time, this screen was state-of-the-art; and it quickly became art-of-the-state of videogames, too. Who didn't love Sonic?

## SUPER SONIC

**It all started with a little blue hedgehog.** Sonic was such a revolutionary character that it's actually quite difficult, ten years after his debut, to understand just how much impact this squat, spiky guy had on the whole industry from the moment he splashed onto the screen. Before Sonic, the only real, recognizable videogame character around was Mario. And Mario, though we love him dearly, was (and is) about as far from hip as...well...Mario. Mario is safe. Mario teaches typing. Mario has spent his entire career trying to rescue a princess.

Sonic, on the other hand, had a "tude. At a time in history when game characters were typically nothing more than tiny spaceships, Sonic was a pissed-off little ruffian with a bone to pick. And while, after a decade, this whole "attitude" bit has become more than a bit trite (read: Poochie et al.), the first time Sonic tapped his foot and glared down his nose at you when you were playing, or teetered dangerously at the edge of a platform, the world of games—and everything that they could become—was fundamentally changed. Sonic may have been the first game character that the average guy wouldn't have been embarrassed to introduce to his girlfriend.

Combined with an innovative ad campaign—you know, the one with the original Sega Scream—portraying games (for the first time) as things that weren't toys, the antics of Sonic the Hedgehog gave gaming its first taste of mainstream cool.

Of course, the millions of copycat characters and ad campaigns—not to mention Sega's ill-advised attempts to make Sonic a family-friendly character—kept things from hitting a critical mass, but the seed was sown.

Sonic the Hedgehog—the face that launched an empire, as well as a whole new epoch in the history of videogames. Without him, we literally wouldn't be here.



# MAKE AN ASS OF YOURSELF

Cool is one thing, but mainstream success is another. In the late '90s, when Japanese coin-op companies realized their profits were tumbling because of fierce competition from home consoles, drastic measures were called for. Enter a wealth of titles that capitalized on the success of simple gameplay (Simon, essentially), backed by awesome style and graphics and aimed squarely at casual gamers.

Here's where we see that despite our fears, casual games really can be for everyone—including hardcore gamers. Although anyone can play them, there's something about funky disco games like *Bust a Groove*, DJ-mixing games like *Beatmania* and the king of dance 'em ups, *Dance Dance Revolution* that makes mixing with the hot politoi kind of fun. Ever played *Guitar Freaks* or *Samba de Amigo*? These games forever put to rest the notion that gaming is a solitary experience. Witness the crowds in the average arcade around these games, and ponder the potential of social gaming as a concept in its own right.



Evan gets into the Samba spirit. Sega should be screaming.



In *Shenmue*, we may have found the world we want to live in; forever. All that's missing is a couple of Jodi.

## REALITY BYTES

"But it looks like crap!" Such was the typical response when non-gamers were confronted by the efforts of coin-op companies in the late '80s to bring in more casual gamers via realistic, 3D polygons. *Hard Drivin'* might have been a bold attempt to create a more realistic racing experience (and in terms of handling it was), but 3D graphics technology was so primitive back then, next to *Out Run* it looked—well—like crap. Despite the major attention paid to games like *Pac-Man* and *Defender* when they were new, it took loads of imagination and an appetite for abstract representations to look at the early arcade games as anything more than just a fad.

It wasn't until *Daytona USA* and *Ridge Racer* introduced detailed texture-mapped polygon worlds into arcades that graphical realism became a major way of drawing in more non-gamers. Better graphics were a bridge to the real world—a conscious detachment from the trappings of fantasy and kiddie graphics and another reason not to feel embarrassed playing a game.

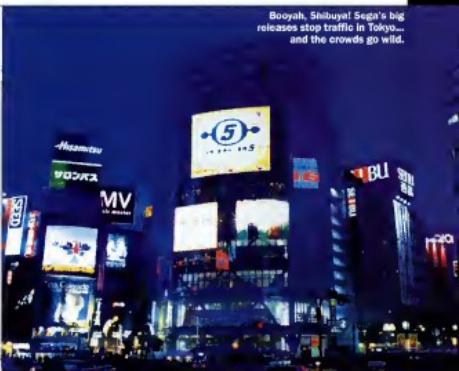
It's therefore little coincidence that as soon as videogame graphics (and sound) became sufficiently interesting to a mainstream audience, console gaming took off big-time with sports titles carrying the gauntlet well into casual games-playing territory (incidentally, it doesn't take a genius to work out that the closer to real life graphics become, the bigger the potential audience). However, the irony then will be that no one will want to dwell in worlds that look like our own. Until then, we've got *Shenmue*.

## TICKET TO TOKYO

But licenses can only take you so far. The really cool stuff—the stuff that affects pop culture—is almost always original. And it seems as if virtually all of the coolest games come from Tokyo: from Shibuya in Tokyo, to be precise. Shibuya is the epicenter of the Japanese youth culture universe: this is where trends start, evolve and die. It's also the fashionable home of a select few Sega developers, where the teams are young and the laid-back working environment is in direct contrast to the stiffing corporate blandness of the Sega of old. United Game Artists (formerly R&D department 9), creators of the retro-chic rhythm action of *Space Channel 5*, is typical of the new face of Tokyo game design, with offices tucked away down an interesting sidestreet not far from the famous Shibuya Square—where giant TV screens adorn the sides of skyscrapers and where SC5 itself was debuted to the Tokyo public late last year. With just a pokey security-pad-operated elevator providing access to its development facilities, only the coming and going of its unmistakably hip staff gives a clue to what lies inside.

Camped out here, in the midst of all of the quirky sophistication and freshness that's intrinsic to this progressive, digital design culture, the designers of *Jet Grind Radio* et al can hardly help but create the coolest titles in the world.

Booyah, Shimbui! Sega's big releases stop traffic in Tokyo... and the crowds go wild.



Rave on! Over the last several years, the Chemical Brothers have stepped off of trendy dance floors and into the soundtracks of some of gaming's most popular titles.



## BOMB THE BASS

**Back in the 80s—despite the fact that computer games had the sonic sophistication of a hundred angry wasps trapped inside a tupperware container—computer musicians achieved cult status in the 8-bit underground, crafting memorable tunes from a few lines of computer code. However, the party really didn't get started until Wipeout's producers convinced big names from the techno scene such as Orbital, Leftfield and the Chemical Brothers to supply tracks for *Psygnosis' 32-bit racer. By the time the sequel came along, the dance community was falling over itself to get its hands on the soundtrack.***

Once CD ROM based consoles found their feet in the mid-'90s, gamers' expectations for full orchestral soundtracks and licensed music grew rapidly. *Road Rash*, *Fighters Megamix* and *Sonic R* were the 32-bit precursors to DC titles that have boasted licensed music—like *Crazy Taxi*, *Jet Grind Radio* and *Ferrari 355*. And it isn't just electronic musicians who've gotten in on the act: *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* has brought pop, punk and hip-hop bands into the mix, including the likes of Rage Against the Machine, Public Enemy and the Dead Kennedys.

**She's too sexy for almost everything...Utafa took videogames to the very forefront of modern culture, with up-to-the-minute, club-inspired moves and gear.**



Music sets the mood for soaring in *Pro Skater*.

## BY DESIGN

**The Designers Republic needs little introduction for anyone who has followed the *Wipeout* series on PlayStation. Still one of the most inventive graphic design houses around, this small staff/big ideas graphic design outfit based in Sheffield, England provided *Psygnosis'* futuristic racer with a truly distinctive identity. Stylish, understated graphics transplanted directly from the leading edge of the underground electronic music scene brought major kudos to the title—making a great game nothing short of spectacular.**

Turning what could have been an isolated occurrence into a successful trend, *PaRappa the Rapper*, *SC5* and puzzle games like *Chu Chu Rocket* have used fashionable retro styling to communicate with a whole new set of style-conscious gameplayers.

# LICENSED TO THRILL

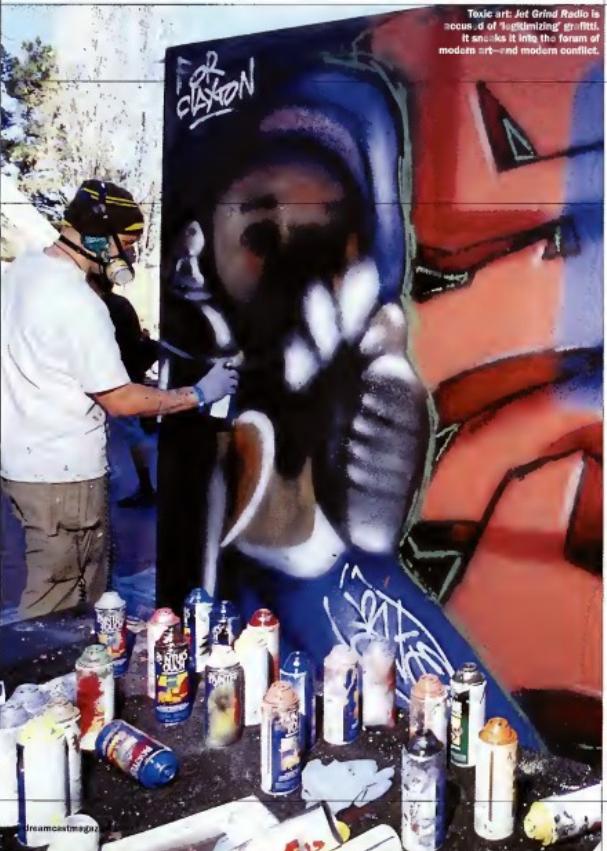
Licensing doesn't stop at music, either. By far the easiest way to extend the appeal of videogames beyond dedicated gamers is to hand over a fat wedge of cash in return for a license to a proven intellectual property. But til the mid-'90s, if a game had a license, it was crap. So the end result is that licenses, which should have helped get tons of new blood into games—and reveal the inherent coolness of gaming to the world—actually had the exact opposite effect (Example: Casual gamer buys licensed game. Game sucks. Casual gamer assumes that all games suck and that gamers are hopeless losers.)

These days, videogame licensing is a far more serious business. For a start, movie companies are naturally not so interested in seeing their franchises developed by losers; they go to the experts. So we have Sega entrusted to produce stunning Star Wars coin-ops such as the Naomi-powered Episode 1 Racer. And we have Italian car manufacturers working closely with designers to produce authentic simulations such as Ferrari 355.

Where licensing has really taken off, though, is in the area of licensed sports personalities and official sporting bodies for home console games, like Tony Hawk's Pro Skater. It's a pattern that follows in the footsteps of FIFA, NFLPA, and countless other brands that game companies have turned into lucrative franchises. One thing's for sure—we've come a long way from the days when licensed meant worthless.



You don't need a driver's license to play this game—but the game needs a license to drive it.



Toxic art: Jet Grind Radio is accused of 'legitimizing' graffiti. It sneaks it into the forum of modern art—and modern conflict.

## X GAMES

Smitebit's Jet Grind Radio is the latest example of videogames not just aping pop culture with "rad-hot" characters endowed with attitude (although there's still plenty of that to go around), but actually breaking new ground in terms of style. A stylish synthesis of hip Tokyo street culture, inline skating, graffiti warfare and free-roaming gameplay, JGR is to urban skate culture what Wipeout was to futuristic racing five years ago. Throw in a pirate radio soundtrack of hip-hop and mashed-up beats and you have the coolest game on the planet, period.

Producer Kawagoe Kiyoshi offered **ODCM** some insight into why the game ended up being so damn funky: "The team is very young, an average of 26 to 27 years old, which is unique inside Sega. We started with just three people, then added three more for a total of six. Everyone brought new concepts and a brand new vision of videogames, and we were told by Sega to do whatever we wanted to do. So we did." Game designers should take note that this sort of small, tightly-knit group gives the development team a personal investment in the game and, accordingly, endows the game with the sort of close personal attention it needs. By contrast, big committees are fatal cul de sacs for innovation.

As in the media worlds of film and music, there's room for both small-time, underground games and those that effectively break through to a mass audience. For every Clerks there is a Toe Jam and Earl, for every Matrix there is a Jet Grind Radio. For every Crimpshire there is an MDK2, and for every Rage Against the Machine there is a Tony Hawk's Pro Skater. As long as the hardcore audience exists, top developers will cater to them—producing beautiful, deep and original games.

The truth is that videogames are still in their formative stages. Nothing can replace talent, and gaming's future depends almost entirely upon a continual influx of new minds and original thinkers into the development community. Stories need to be told, interactions need to be streamlined and paradigms need to be exploded. The future of videogames is very much in your hands, fellow gamers: For if anyone can understand what still needs to be done, it is you: the readers of **ODCM**. Make your mark.

# TWINKLE, TWINKLE,



# LITTLE STAR



COVER STORY:  
**PHANTASY STAR ONLINE**  
**FIRST LOOK**

TEXT: FRANCESCA REYES

## SEGA'S FLAGSHIP RPG SERIES CRUISES INTO THE NEW AGE OF GAMING: ONLINE

**At the dawn of 2001, console gaming takes the next step in its evolutionary process, with the debut of Phantasy Star Online: the first US console RPG to go global over the Net. It isn't the Massively Multiplayer RPG that some DC owners were hoping for, but backed by servers that can support up to a thousand simultaneous users, PSO is definitely a step in the right direction.**

After a year of hoarding tiny kernels of info, **ODCM** has finally been invited to partake of the whole feast, and man, is it a tasty one.

Some might call the pairing of *Phantasy Star* and Sonic Team an odd choice, but if you're up on your history of the series it's easy to see the connection. Yuji Naka and some of the various members of Sonic Team have been with PS since the beginning, with Naka claiming lead programming credits on both *Phantasy Star I* and *II* (interestingly, hardcore gamers have always held that the original title is the best in the series on the basis of its groundbreaking size, scope and gameplay—not to mention its ingenious storyline). Precedents initially set by Sonic Team have been carried through the run of the series, on both the Sega Master System and Genesis. So really, the Team was the logical choice for captaining *Phantasy Star*'s next big trip into innovation—online.

An early version of PSO has finally hit the **ODCM** offices—not yet in reviewable shape, but good enough to go the distance. So grab a long呼吸...we're giving in.

Phantasy Star Online ©Ibartron: Sonic Team



Has Sonic ever beat his creator at a game of PSO? Naka's smart, but Sonic's so dang fast...

ODCM's crack Japanese correspondent Christophe Kagotani managed to catch up with Sonic Team CEO Yuji Naka, when he could take time out from race car driving (we hear Naka recently traded in his Sonic-blue Porsche for a super swank Lotus Elize, which he races at the track while the bigwigs at Sega Japan cross their fingers nervously and hope he finds a safer hobby soon; maybe they should just remind him of what happened to Mark Hamill when he started racing between *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*). Naka gave Christophe the scoop: check it out.

**Q** What were you trying to achieve with this game? Did you achieve it?  
**A** It should have been released in March 2000, but I wanted to add a few features that I thought were important. As the volume increased, the team needed more time. This isn't a standard RPG, where you have to avoid boring players with a game world that's too large. PSO is about online communication. I wanted this to be the heart of the project, and it took time. I think we achieved what we set out to do.

**Q** PSO is the first RPG to break "language barriers". Will you break the "console barrier" in the near future?

**A** It's difficult to predict whether the translator can be ported to any other systems. PSO in its actual shape would never run on any other hardware, even on the PCI. We are playing constantly with the V-Sync [chip]...so it may never work on PCs. And if you're talking about the newest consoles, like Sony's [PS2], it will never run; no chance. Maybe on an Xbox or Game Cube. Maybe.

Considering how hard it has been to break the language barrier, only one platform could do it: Dreamcast. Breaking through the hardware wall may represent a marketing advantage, but I don't see any merit in that. When you develop a game for different platforms, you must base your work around the system that is the weakest or least evolved. So if you wanted to make the game run on both Dreamcast and the PS2, you could never get the same result for either. The project would then become a very cheap-looking game. >>

When you start a new game, it's up to you to choose which of the nine different variable characters you'll use for the duration of your journey in PSO.



The information hub is where you'll gather all the know-how you'll need in order to move ahead on your adventure. Oh, and the guys there wear some spiffy duds.

## "Once you've taken the job and in for a few nasty surprises—

### Building a Better Android

One of the most clever features in *Phantasy Star Online* is the option for players to create their own characters through an Edit mode. While you're not able to build one from scratch, you can choose between nine available characters representing three distinct categories: Hunter, Ranger and Force.

Hymar, Hucast and Hanyuru are the Hunters, experts in the art of close combat and swordplay. Raycast, Raymar and Raykashiru are the Rangers, using many weapons proficiently but specializing in long-range attacks. Finally, Fommaru, Fonyeru and Fonyume are the Force characters, masters of spell-casting and other wispy-wafty activities. Physically, they're the weakest, but they can perform long-range attacks with a variety of spells (of course, we should note that all of these names may change for the US version).

And don't forget that in addition to these three different classes, you must

also figure in PSO's three different character races: Human, Newman and Android (some characters incorporate hybrid features). From that point, you're then able to customize all sorts of cool things about your character, from its proportions to its "color" and style (it's all about coordinating, girlfriend). Some characters have more tweakable features than others, but all in all, this game makes it uniquely possible to create a totally original fighter.

### Meseta makes the world go round

When you're all set, you'll begin your journey in a self-contained space station floating through the Algol Solar System. You're a member of Pioneer 2, a team of interstellar refugees on its way to colonize a new planet. The group is traveling in the wake of an earlier team, called Pioneer 1, which had been sent years ago to terraform the land—but which went suddenly off

the radar (literally) just before Pioneer 2 is about to land. More on that later.

While on the station, you'll discover merchant shops, information hubs and transporters which can take you down to the new planet's surface. And in order to beef up your character's arsenal, you'll need the right amount of the PS-standard "meseta" (money) in order to purchase any goods. So first, you'll need to ask for advice and help at the info desk below the main deck.

Once you've spoken to the head of operations at the information desk, you'll receive all the necessary goodies (like a field map) and get access to the main transporter in the city square. According to the man behind the desk, you're one of a few select people who possess both the skills and qualifications necessary for joining the research team. What does the research team get to do? Well, it explores the planet's surface far below—focusing on the environs of a gigantic explosion that lit



Everything in Phantasy Star Online is rendered in lovely, textured polygons. From the townspeople to the creatures that inhabit the various dimensions, every denizen of this world is equipped with great realtime animations and wicked special effects. No one does colors like Sonic Team: You really feel like you're in another world.



## landed on the planet, you're and waves of freaky monsters."

tums out) was what wiped out all communications with Pioneer 1. Lucky you.

Once you've taken the job and landed on the planet, you're in for a few nasty surprises—and waves of freaky monsters. Your task is to defeat them, while collecting as much meseta as your handbag can carry.

### Field Work

Three distinct areas are accessible right now, each containing different types of creatures with unique attributes. The Lava Zone is a fiery cave buried deep within the planet, whose inhabitants are immune to the effects of heat. The Deepest Cavern Zone is full of dangerous creatures, maze-like pathways, puzzles and traps. And the River Mouth Zone is a huge open area riddled with poisonous plants and hatches that open into hidden areas.

There are 50 or so different quests, ranging from battling huge bosses to finding magical items or using team-

work to move obstacles that block entrances to new areas. Dungeons are commonplace, and generated randomly by the game. This means that monsters, items, doors and the path you need to follow will differ every time you play. And Sonic Team's Yuji Naka has stated that once the initial quests have been completed, the team may be adding even more, in order to make this world a constantly evolving place where there's always something new to do.

While this option is still up in the air, we're quite content to hack our way through monsters while deciphering the mystery behind Pioneer 1's disappearance. Randomly placed ground pods, called "cells," contain bits of story as told by its long-time team members, and events will help to guide you through the game's loose plot. But don't depend on the storyline to keep you enthralled throughout the length of PSO...it is, ultimately, a game

of action and online teamwork. In fact, it's more like the early computer RPGs of Wizardry's ilk than it is like *Final Fantasy*, but the core role-playing elements remain strong.

### Brave New Word

As the title suggests, PSO is meant to be played over the Net. When you begin a game, you can choose to play either offline or online. If you choose the latter, you'll be automatically transported to the massive mothership where you'll enter one of ten different sections. Each section branches off into yet another ten lobbies, and in each of these lobbies, you'll meet up with other players and marvel at each other's wonderfully customized avatars. Think of it as a glorified chat room with a purpose (usually).

This might not sound so exciting, but it's a whole different experience when you do it for the first time in person. Imagine communicating with >>

Q As an online RPG, there is an odd structure to PSO—lots of levels rather than a coherent world. Why?

A You know, the story is not that expansive. There is one dungeon [split into various subsections], and you're able to explore and enjoy it with other players. There's a central plot, but this isn't a standard RPG and shouldn't be compared in a standard way.

Q Did you consider other methods for communication and translation, besides the branch translation system that is currently used? Why did you finally opt for this system?

A I've been thinking of creating this type of communication system for more than five years now; I really wanted to design a system allowing people from all over the world to communicate together. But there were many elements I did not know how to handle—I spent much time on paper trying to find a way.

I started with words. We are still working on the word select system: Japanese and English are quite easy, since there is only a problem of word location in the sentence, but in Spanish or French, there are male or female words with so many rules that it's been a nightmare. Last month, we had to redesign the entire system!

This "universal" translator is a first for the entire game industry, which has been a real challenge. The word select system has 2000 words so far, but I realize that players would like to use more words than this to express their feelings, and it's been incredibly difficult to satisfy everyone. I'm picturing that in ten years, people will look back at PSO and laugh while saying something like "Wow. There were that few words back then?"

Other companies will soon begin to consider the possibilities, and will most likely improve upon it. If you're first, you cannot make something perfect.

Q Are there plans for translating PSO into more languages than the current five?

A For the moment, no. For example, Italian would be great, but it would take too much time to reimplement it. I would also like to include Portuguese and Korean—in Korea, the Internet is booming! But at this time, I will stay at five. I believe that in the future, there will be a company offering a system with ten languages!

Q How important is the identity of your character? How would players go about creating more than one character?

A It is simple. One VMU, one character. So if you put two VMUs in the controller, you will have access to two characters. If you have ten or 20 VMUs, you would be able to create that number of characters. >>

Q Will we ever catch you online, playing PSO?  
A Yes! I still don't know if I will design a special character to do so, but I'll play it just after the launch in a standard way. I've played *Chu Chu Rocket* plenty of times online, as well—it's a huge pleasure playing Sonic Team games online with other gamers. I would love to ask them very precise questions, but it will be difficult with the vocabulary of the actual word select system.

Q Would you have preferred a massively multiplayer game rather than the four-player option you have here? Does the game benefit from a smaller number of players?

A To put up servers able to support so many users from all around the world, it would probably take two years for the technical programming alone! So we had to stay on a lower scale. All in all, I really would have liked to have had six additional months to finish PSO; when you are close to the end of a development you want to add more and more features. I would have to push the game off into the 21st century, though, and my goal was to release the game in Japan in the 20th century.

Also, you cannot write to the GD-ROM. There is no hard disk inside Dreamcast, so it's very difficult to store data in order to properly enjoy "massively multiplayer" gaming. I guess PS2 or Xbox will have these types of games, using their hard drives. [But with PSO] I think it will be incredibly difficult for them. Even if they start now on that type of project it would be impossible for them to release it in under two years. We still don't know if PS2 will be around in two years' time. [Meow—Ed.]

I think it would be great to have a hard disk, but given what's happening on games like *Ultima Online* or *EverQuest*...both games are continuously updated through internet-distributed patches. The companies that make these games are constantly working

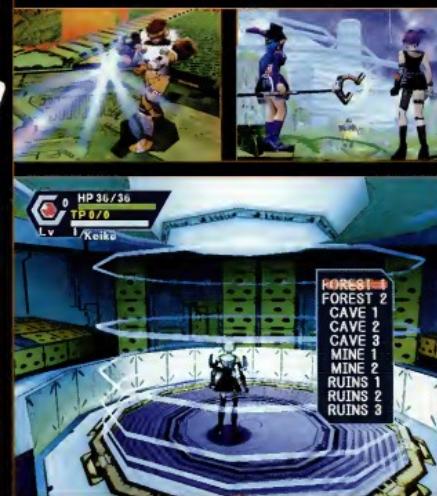
## STOP MAKING SENSE



Chat rooms. Lava. em or lets 'em, they bring together the best and the worst of us gamers, relying on a common culture and language to bridge all of the gaps in between. And this means—you guessed it—that there are limits to what Sega will allow gamers to say. Now, I'm not saying that there isn't an automatic censoring program included here, which keeps those with sensitive eyes and ears bawled away from the salty, sailor-tongued set.

Type an explosive in, and you can expect it to be represented by all manner of symbols, such as asterisks. It's an interesting feature that's sure to engage and mystify thousands of players. Non-edited screenshots included.

Ah, pixie goodness is back—and joined by a host of android warriors packed in for good measure. You'll have to choose your character wisely at the outset, though, to avoid being stuck with a close-range fighter rather than a spell-slinging mage. It's entirely up to you, and it all depends on your preference and the enemies you'll be fighting.



## "Select a message in your own language and it translates it into your fellow

friends and strangers, all equally eager to bash in some dragon skulls, and then forming a complete party to do exactly that. It's a thrill like no other. And the options are nearly endless.

You can talk to any of the lobby officers in order to find out what your choices are or to register your party for

it's a freedom unlike any other—and it's even international!

Sonic Team has come up with a neat trick to overcome international communication problems. The game includes what is referred to as a "Word Selection System": i.e., a lexicon of 2,000 commonly used words and

people around the globe will be playing at various times of day. Sega reckons that the network will therefore cope well with the demands placed upon it at launch. And of course, if the game is hugely popular, Sega can always expand the network. You won't be surprised if there's a lot of activity.

### About Alain

Alain is a Frenchman who expects to move to the United States in the near future. He's been writing for us since the days of *Final Fantasy VII*.



## language, and PSO instantly adventurers' native tongues."

bonus of being able to work through the game in singleplayer mode, which enables you to buff up your character so you can avoid being shamed or taunted by other avatars online.

But don't count on finishing the game on your own. The monsters are tough and the bosses even more so; so you'll need all the help you can get from your fellow humans in order to pull off a successful day in PSO.

With the game's impending release set for January, you won't have to wait long to test its waters for yourself. Will it be worth the six years we've spent without a new chapter in the PS series? We'd like to play through the final version before we make that call, but what we've seen so far hints strongly at an industry-changing title. PSO is about to become one of the biggest precedent-setting events in console gaming history.

Don't miss it.

"Um, hello there... Do you think you could move ever so slightly to the right for a second Mr. Monster? I'm having trouble seeing your pretty eyes..." BLAM!



On that note, what about sequels?

It is a possibility that PSO will evolve into a series, but developing this title alone has consumed pretty much all of our time and energy! However, as we get closer to releasing the game, I think many of the team members have begun to come up with all kinds of different features that they would have loved to include. So the appeal of making a sequel is getting stronger. Maybe we will decide to make a second episode instead of an Append disc (add-on or enhanced version discs are called append discs in Japan). But it will still depend on how much new stuff we would be able to put inside of a PSO II. If the changes we'd like to implement on the features we'd like to add after the release of the first episode are not significant enough for a second episode to be developed, we may look into making an Append disc.

Both PSO and Sonic look amazing. How is it that Sonic Team is one of the only developers to get this sort of visual performance on Dreamcast? It is sooooo hard to get to this level. I really believe that every developer is working just as hard. I guess the big difference is in design sense. This is one strong point in our [team's entire body of work], I think.

What are your expectations for PSO?

One million. I would like PSO to be a million-selling title. But who knows? I know that the PSO will be our main market, and for the moment, feedback has been really great about the project. I really spent an infinite amount of time plunging deep into the machine of Dreamcast to see how it was meant to perform...what it was meant to be both ideally and realistically. And PSO was the clear answer. In a way, it's the killer app for Dreamcast: it uses every aspect of the system, including the most important feature, the modem. I hope that people really understand and truly enjoy this game, as they should.

### KNOCKIN' ON HEAVEN'S FOUR

#### Phantasy Star I

Where it all begins. Back in 1987, this first chapter follows heroine Alys and her three companions across the Algo Solar System, as they avenge the death of Alys' brother, Death, glory and a very ugly end awaits them.

#### Phantasy Star II

Two years later, the sequel arrives. Government operative Rolf is sent to find out why the Mother Brain that rules a world called Mota has been corrupted, aided by Nel, a constructed being (i.e., hot android-type chick), and a soldier named Rhys. While Mota's corruption seems to take the why android chicks are so damn hot.

#### Phantasy Star III

1993's installment included three heroes from three different time periods in a civil war setting. Returning to the Algo Star System, the game follows Rhys, Mota and Meiu (not android chick #3) as they draw ever-closer to... (drumroll #3) yet another shocking conclusion.

#### Phantasy Star IV

1994: year of the mega-epic finale. Chaz Ashley embarks on a quest to decide the fate of the cosmos. A Newman, an Esper and an android chip in to help Chaz vanquish his foes and save the world. To reward his efforts, he gets his wallet with big earnings from the Hunter's Guild. The largest, longest and (some say) the best title in the entire series. We loved it.



# H A L F

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**INCLUDES  
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▼ New weapons, characters and effects designed to take advantage of Dreamcast's power.



▼ Intelligent characters and an intense story create a unique action game experience.

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Animated Violence  
Animated Blood

- L I F E

# "THE BEST FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER OF ALL TIME..."



*-Official Sega Dreamcast Magazine*

Just another day at the office. Or so you thought...until your experiment blew up in your face. Now, with aliens coming through the walls and a military death squad killing everything in site, you're scrambling to stay alive. Half-Life combines great storytelling with intense action and advanced technology to create what many consider to be the greatest action game experience of all time.

Plus, here for the first time is an entirely new Half-Life mission created exclusively for the Dreamcast - Blue Shift! In this huge new campaign, you take command of a security guard at the Black Mesa research facility and battle your way through the chaos of an alien invasion.



▀ Huge new mission, Half-Life: Blue Shift - designed just for the Dreamcast!



▀ Play the game that has won more than 50 Game of the Year awards from publications around the world.

Opinion  
ENTERTAINMENT

gearbox  
ENTERTAINMENT

DEVELOPED BY  
**VALVE**

**SIERRA**  
STUDIOS

Sega Dreamcast

## COMING SOON



"Oy."

# Floigan Brothers

Brothers gonna work it out



**A**fter more than a year of NSA-like secrecy, Sega has finally allowed us to peek under the blouse of its highly-anticipated adventure title, Floigan Brothers. And we're happy to give you the full report on what may be the zaniest, kookiest and downright wackiest game you'll play this year.

**Taking place in a crazy 3D** junkyard, the game concerns two brothers, Moigle and Hoigie, whose mismatched size and intelligence quotients usher to mind fond memories of Lenny

and George, Ren and Stimpy and *Beyond Thunderdome's* Master/Blaster. Players have direct control over Hoigie (the shorter and more competent of the two), but must learn to communicate with and take care of big, bad Moigle as well (although Moigle isn't exactly the sharpest tool in the shed, he has a mind—or at least an agenda—of his own). You'll have to get Moigle and Hoigie to work together—through both direct action and indirect manipulation. If Hoigie is unable to reach something on a roof, for example, you can

badger Moigle until he gets angry and throws Hoigie onto said roof.

## Oh, Brother... see if you can match 'em

Michael	David
Franz	Chong
Joel	Terence
Donny	Emelio
Sean	Liam
Cheech	Simon
Philip	Tito
Charlie	Ethan
Noel	Marie
Simon	Hans

The plot focuses on an evil oil baron, who discovers that the junkyard inhabited by the Floiganis is actually the precise location of a lucrative oil field: so he attempts to put the brothers out of business. It's a competent retelling of a classic anti-big business parable, and it gives you ample incentive to get your lug of a brother to pull his own weight.

**What makes the game so distinctive—aside from its Tex Avery-inspired brand of slapstick humor—is the detail evident in every part of its**

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**Who runs Barbertown? MASTER BLASTER RUNS BARBERTOWN.** Fioigan Brothers is definitely not your average vid-gam... No blood, no killing, no saving the universe, no kickdrills, no first places, no breasts, no alibis, no death and no taxes.



**Visual Concepts has promised top-notch (er—notch) voice-acting talent for the characters in Fioigan Bros. Every line in the game will be voice-acted, which makes the kids (read: us) happy. Which way did he go, George?**

design. Visual Concepts has created lovely characters with full 3D movement, who are well able to access and interact with nearly everything in their surroundings. Some of these actions are necessary to move ahead in the game, while others will merely provoke some sort of sight-gag and/or emotional response: accidentally stumble into the river, for example, and you'll shoot out of the drainpipe.

**The player's relationship with Moigie is important as well, since his evolution throughout the game will hinge greatly upon the way**

in which he is treated. The more frustrated you become with the goofy doofus, the less friendly and responsive he will be towards you. It's a curiously converse nod to Lionhead's upcoming Black and White and, depending on the depth it provides, it might just be the sort of interesting twist that'll take Fioigan's gameplay over the top into excellence.

With wonderfully cartoonish 3D graphics, interesting and varied mini-games, and the potential to take man-machine interaction to some entirely new plane, Sega may well have built itself one of the year's most inspired and enjoyable

sleeper hits. This oddball's got loads of talent; here's hoping they get it right.

EVAN SHAMOON

## Dreamcast

PUBLISHED BY: SEGA DEVELOPED BY: VISUAL CONCEPTS  
GENRE: ADVENTURE CRASH LOYERS / RELEASE DATE: Q3 2001

### PLUSES [-]

Graphics are cartoonish as hell, and the interaction with Moigie was cool.

### MINUSES [-]

Some puzzles seemed a bit too obvious, while some seemed too obscure.

### BOTTOM LINE [...]

Time will tell whether or not this game manages to capture that old LucasArts magic. We're crossing our toes.

# Welcome to COMING SOON

## Previewed This Month

Anticipation is sweet, and these DC games could be even sweeter. Read on... and find out what you'll be playing in months to come!

- 18 WHEELER: PAT/44 Breaker 1-9, you got your ears on?
- SONIC ADVENTURE 2/48 What's blue and has 'tude?
- PROJECT JUSTICE 5/20 Watch these rival schools duke it out!
- FIGHTING VIPERS 2/52 The return of a legendary 3D brawler
- HEAD HUNTER/54 E3's mysterious "game reveals its secrets..."
- ALIEN FRONT ONLINE/56 Online alien-smittin' goodness!
- TYPING OF THE DEAD/58 Weirdest. Game. Ever.



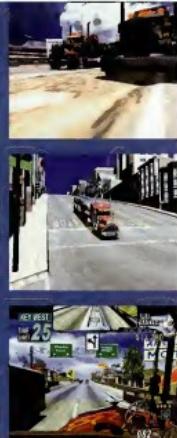
Is the keyboard mightier than the zombie? Fran Rayas says so. She's so into it that she made a harness for her keyboard just like the ones in *In crazy Crazy Taxi* style. (page 46)

## INCOMING!

All Dreamcast, all the time: planned releases for 2000 and beyond

Bang!-O-Shooter	Gorka Marks Racing	Feb
BANG!: Gunship Elite Shooter	Out Trigger Shooter/Action	Feb
Chargin'N Blast Action	Project Justice/Fighting	Feb
Coaster Works Sim	Aton: In the Dark IV Adventure	Feb
Ducati World Racing	Matt Hoffman's ProBMX Sports	Feb
Evil Dead: Hell to the King Action	Commandos 2 Action	Mar
Grandia II RPG	Fioigan Brothers Action	Mar
HellLife FPS	Soul Resaver 2 Adventure	Mar
Heros of Might & Magic 3 RPG	The Mummy Action	Mar
Iron Ages Flight Sim	18 Wheeler Ambulance Truckin' Driving	Mar
KOF: Evolution Fighting	Coga Booga Online/Action	April
Max Steel Action	Bomberman Online Action	Q2
Prince of Persia 3D Action	III Blood Action	Q2
Racecad of Luddes War RPG	WSB2K2 Sports	Spring
Resident Evil 2 Action/Adv.	Crazy Taxi 2 Action	Summer
Star GP Racing	Samba 2002 Music	Summer
Surf Rocket Racer Racing	Bass Fishing 2 Sports	Summer
System Shock 2 Shooter/RPG	Furthorian Online RPG	Summer
Sno Cross Int. Champ. Racing	Agartha Adventure	'01
The Grinch Action	Black and White Strategy	'01
Tomb Raider Chronicles Action/Adv.	Buffy the Vampire Slayer Action	'01
Xtreme Sports Sports	Head Hunter Adventure	'01
World's Greatest Pot. Chases Driving	Heavy Metal FMX Shooter	'01
Star Wars Super Bomber Racing	Legend of the Blackmesters RPG	'01
Urban Chaos Action	Shrapnel Urban Warfare 2025 Action	Feb
Amidala 3D Shootin/RPG	Samba Hoops Sports	'01
Dark Angel: Vamp Apocalypse Action	Planet of the Apes Action	'01
Daytona: Network Racing Racing	Peacemakers Strategy	'01
Dragon Riders Adventure	Roswell Conspiracy Action	'01
Phantasy Star Online RPG	Soldier of Fortune Action/Shooter	'01
Typing of the Dead Eco-horror	Sonic Adv. 2 Platformer	'01
Unreal Tournament FPS	Galaxy Adventure	TBA
Alien Front Online/Shooter/Action	Picasso Action	TBA
	Quark RPG	TBA

**KEY WEST**  
**TIME LIMIT 21**



The game uses a modified version of the Crazy Taxi engine, but we'd almost go out on a limb and say that it looks better than it plays. It's especially pretty when you see it in person, even in its unfinished state. We were impressed with how sharp and clean the lines were (these shots don't quite convey that, of course, but then, the cameras always add tens of pounds).

# 18 Wheeler: Pro Trucker

Will Sega haul ass or drop a load? Well so far, it looks truckin' awesome.

If *Crazy Taxi* is crazy, then this 18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker is downright ludicrous. But hey, there's a first for everything. And if Sega has anything to say about it, "everything" includes a whole new genre of cross-country trucking sims. With the exception of cat-calls, CB radios and "resting" at private rest-stops, this is about as close as many of us will get to being real-life truck-drivers.

You begin by choosing a driver and a big rig (you'll have four to choose from), and the type/style/ flavor of the cargo you're going to haul from New York to San Francisco (and no, you can't choose a flatbed full of downtrodden New Yorkers migrating Westward to find a

mellower, gentler City). The heavier your payload, the more difficult the handling—and, of course, the larger the bounty you'll receive at the end of the line, if you get there intact.



Once you've taken care of these particulars, it's time to stretch your legs, climb up into your tricked-out big rig and head out to the open road, where you'll face off against

the baddest trucker we've seen since Large Marge—your remarkably diabolical arch-rival, Lizard Tail. Ever seen Steven Spielberg's 1971 movie *Duel*? The one where this guy gets

chased by a sinister, faceless truck driver like, unto death does him part, for the length of a feature film? Well, Lizard Tail is on a par with that Faceless Scary Truck Dude on any scale of pure evil. He's a slimy bastard who's willing to do anything he can to make his way west before you do, from cutting you off to dumping his cargo out on the road to hurling—gasp!—undeniably harsh insults in your general direction.

Now, throw in some truly overzealous law enforcement officers, some fast-forwarded, amazingly hyperactive weather patterns and—ta-dah!—a pile of debris even higher than the mound on Chris's desk, and you've got something that's a little better and badder than

## Scary as Hell

OKAY, WE'RE MAN (AND WOMAN) ENOUGH to admit it: The first-time breaker-of-all-trucks Large Marge went all crazy in *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, we were very scared. In memory of that great moment, we're going to play a little bit of the old Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon with Ms. Alice Nunn, who so graciously played the role of Large Marge. How goes Alice Nunn plays the woman parole member in Who's that Girl? with Madonna. Madonna joins Geena Davis in *A League of Their Own*, who joins Penny Marshall and Lori Petty in *Thelma & Louise*. Kiefer acted alongside DeNiro in *Mean Streets* (among others), and DeNiro teamed up with Kevin Bacon in *Sleepers*. And there's your six degrees.





Sega has modeled the game's level system to mimic the American highway system. And it's face it, the game itself mimics real life: when's the last time you saw a truck that wasn't driving like a directionless bat out of hell?



As you approach an SUV on this freeway, think about all of the times you've had to crawl through supermarket parking lots behind some 4-wheel-drive vehicle, that slowed down to a near halt every time it hit one of those goddamn suburban speed bumps. Yip, it bugs the hell out of us, too. Kill, Kill, Kill!

your average cross-country drive. If an orangutan (or other primate of equal or lesser

value) rode shotgun in these trucks as your wacky and whimsical sidekick, this game could pass for a fantastically successful feature film.

These rigs handle like the multi-ton beasts that they are—tight turns and precision steering are nowhere to be found, so you'll be learning a whole new style of driving. Destroying the relatively puny cars and SUVs in your path is quite cathartic—and especially cool is the game's slipstream feature, which gives you an added burst of speed whenever you place yourself in the wake of another truck.

Much like *Crazy Taxi*, the game manages to thrive on quirky and addictive gameplay in ways that you could never

imagine unless you'd played it. And with four levels and 20 stages along the way, you'd better be sure to pack a whole lot of NoDoz for the trip.

**Much like its yellow-checked** colleague, the Dreamcast version of *18 Wheeler* takes the standard arcade single-player mode and tears into it like a ravenous pack of wild hyenas. Not only does the game provide an assortment of mini-games—like the "Parking Challenge", where players must race against the clock as they burn rubber through a cramped trucking depot—but it also taps into the glory that is multiplayer gaming. *18 Wheeler* jacks into SegaNet for some real, honest head-to-head

racing mania, adding a few online-only options—like a Score Attack mode which allows players to post their single-player scores for worldwide ranking—just to round out the menu of fun.

And as if all this wasn't enough, you're even able to save up cash to buy fuzzy dice and roach-clip feather-type things with which to decorate your massive vehicle. Save up enough of these things and you'll obtain the ultimate prize: a crazy super-powered horn that's strong enough to blast objects out of the way with the sheer density of its sound waves. (How cool is that?)

The game still has a fair amount of development to go before its January release; hopefully the team will use this

time constructively. Muchos minigames and a good sound-track would make all the difference (hint, hint). Doubtful? Try the game on demo disc in this issue if you don't believe our hype. —EVAN SHAMON



### Truckin' Slang

back row n. The area at some truck stops where hookers hang out.  
having shittin' trouble v. Falling asleep, as in, "He was having shittin' trouble when he hit that tree."  
motion lesion n. Pain.

plain white wrapper n. Unstacked cup car  
prefer n. Refrigerated cargo trailer.  
hoolin' dispatcher brains v. Pulling an empty trailer; "deskeading".  
greasy side adj. Flipped over.

For more trucker speak on the web, visit <http://www.vets.lbi.gov/~slaw/trucks/slang.html>

### Dreamcast

PUBLISHED BY SEGA DEVELOPED AND  
SERIALIZED BY SEGA U.S.A. PLAYERS 1-2  
ONLINE RELEASE DATE FEBRUARY

**PLUSES [+]**  
Absurdly great concept, excellent design  
And the graphics are hellishly pretty.

**MINUSES [-]**  
Much like real trucking, the game is hellish,  
thus runs the risk of growing old.

**BOTTOM LINE [ ]**  
We can't wait to stop making stupid  
truck references and just play the game

Sega has stated that this city, which looks exactly like San Francisco, is not-repeat, not-San Francisco. Sure. Whatever. Anyway, watching Sonic board down these hills is an amazing experience that really exceeds the punch of anything in Sonic Adventure 2.



# Sonic Adventure 2

Like our mamas told us, the 87th time is always the charm

**I**t's true. According to Sega, Sonic characters have been in 86 games (and other programs) since Sonic first burst onto the scene in 1991. Damn. Of course, the hedgehog has only had two outings so far on Dreamcast, and one of those was a party game. With Sonic Adventure 2, Yuji Naka and Sonic Team are seeking to redefine the character, the gameplay, and even the Dreamcast as dramatically as the first Sonic the Hedgehog redefined Genesis and gaming itself a decade ago.

And from early reports, it looks like the company is well on its way to succeeding. First shown in very early form at the

last E3, Sonic Adventure 2 has come a long way in six months. Originally scheduled for release this Spring, it has been pushed back to Fall 2001 (that's the tentative US release date, anyway) to ensure that the team has enough time to make the game everything they want it to be. And if the development process succeeds, Sonic

Adventure 2 will totally change your perception of just what a Dreamcast game can be.

How? The graphics, for one. The textures are far beyond anything seen in any realtime game to date, on any system, and the levels show clear proof that Sonic Team has been getting intimate with the bare metal of the system. Each level has

been carefully constructed to maximize the total current potential of Dreamcast. Draw distances are massive, and huge vertical drops are common. Clipping has been all but eliminated, and several new libraries of lighting and special effects are in the works. The result should be an absolute visual dream.

**A**lthough only a few characters have been revealed so far (Sonic, Knuckles, and Dr. Robotnik), sources tell us that five new characters, pulled from former Sonic games on Genesis, Game Gear and arcade platforms, will also join the party—introducing new styles of game play in the process. As usual, of course, the bulk of the play will involve Sonic facing off against Robotnik's devious machines and weapons, but in this game, you can expect to see something a little more sinister than good old Dr. Robotnik as well.

That's right: Dark Sonic will indeed make a reappearance in the series. There's no



## The Sonic Hedgehog Gene

DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A GENE named after Sega's mascot? The 'sonic hedgehog' gene (named, depending on who you ask, after the blue dye used to identify it or its spiky appearance) apparently helps regulate anterior-posterior limb patterning in animals—and oddly enough, it's also about to become part of a pharmaceutical cocktail served to balding men in order to stimulate hair growth. It's a pretty popular gene, too, featured in several dozen articles across the Net.



It's Chao chapel! Just as in the last game, collecting, raising, and keeping Chaos healthy and happy plays a major role in the game. It's a departure from the typical action found in Sonic games, but it's a welcome addition that keeps things interesting. According to a Sonic Team spokesman, there will be VMU games included with Sonic Adventure 2. Hopefully, some kind of Chao wrangling will be part of the VMU lineup.



**Oh, that Knuckles!** Most of your favorite Sonic characters are back this time, including Knuckles and, of course, the evil Dr. Robotnik (who, we hear, got his doctorate in Slavic Linguistics and did his dissertation translating an old Russian text). Weird.



official word on just what he'll do or how he'll do it, but we're led to expect to see some serious challenges to our favorite blue mascot.

And as in the last game, the management of Chaos will play a major role; you'll have to collect and regroup them from all over the world. It's possible to have limited communication with the Chaos, but more importance is placed on how you manage them. You've got to bring them up, take care of them, heal them when they're sick, etc. Just like in Sonic Adventure 1, there will be mini-games aplenty for your VMU—and a few hidden inside the main game, as well.



### Sole Reaver

CROSS TRAINERS made to grind? Formerly available only as power-ups, grind-able shoes can now be found online. Shops ([www.sonic-shoes.com](http://www.sonic-shoes.com)) feature hard plastic-trimmed sole plates that can grind rails and rails with ease after you've peeled off the "By peeling off this you waive your rights to sue" sticker.

**To keep Sonic fresh in his 87th outing,** Sonic Team has equipped him with several new accessories, the coolest

probably being a new pair of shoes that enable him to grind on various surfaces. These shoes and other items permit the hog to have tons more interaction with the 3D backgrounds of levels than he ever had before—one amazing sequence in the demo, for instance, shows Sonic dropping from a helicopter with a surfboard on his feet, all the way to the street below...where he proceeds to surf the not-San Francisco hills. Underwater sequences are also planned, and we assume that the task of keeping Sonic from drowning by locating air bubbles will factor heavily in gameplay. (While we're on the subject,

does anything ever get your heart pumping like waiting for a bubble to show up in a classic Sonic game, as Sonic slowly runs out of air while music swells in the background? Us, neither.)

**Although there's no word yet** on online play, smart money says that there'll be at least some kind of Internet component to the game—although exactly how it would work is unknown at this time.

At any rate, it's clear that Sonic Team plans to take its mascot to the next level, with hundreds of new additions to the game. Hopefully, the team also plans to shore up the one

weak point in Sonic Adventure 1: its sometimes out-of-control control. CHRISTOPHE KAGATONE

## ON THE MARK Dreamcast

PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM GENRE: SONIC GENRE: JAPAN PLAYERS: 1 ONLINE: YES RELEASE DATE: FALL 2001

### PLUSES [+]

A new Sonic game, with more to love than ever before! We can't wait to grind the world.

### MINUSES [-]

Let's hope the team tweaked the controls from the first game.

### BOTTOM LINE [—]

Sonic is approaching his tenth birthday, and while he may not have some highs and lows in the past decade, no one can make you realize just how cool games can be as well as Sonic can.



Team special attacks can be performed at any time during a fight, but you'll have to tap out your special attack bar to unleash the most devastating team attacks.

Many fan favorites from the Rival Schools series return for Project Justice. Schoolgirl Hinata is back for more of her high-kickin' antics, as is Juvenile Shoma, who displays some rather nasty 'em 'n' ball specials that send opponents flying. Along with these returning characters come three new playable fighters. To know 'em is to love 'em. But will these crazy kids ever graduate?

## Rival Schools 3: Project Justice

3D fighting: three times the fun?

**M**any Capcom fans may have been turned off by previous Rival Schools games, with their precious, cuter-than-Olsen-twins look and humor. If you were one of those people, you missed out on experiencing some of Capcom's best—yes, we said best—3D Japanese fighting games. We're not afraid to admit how much we loved these games. Somehow, the extremely exaggerated moves of the Versus games seemed to blend perfectly with the unique look of the Rival Schools series. And fortunately, Project Justice seems to be at least as good as its truly excellent predecessors.

As in the previous games, moves are executed in the typical Street Fighter fashion.

Combos are carried out exactly as they are in the Versus games; players can chain together a series of regular attacks with special and super moves, in crazy, high-flying air combos. Matches are between

two teams of three characters, and although there's no Tag feature available, there are plenty of tag team combos to satisfy any combo nut. These Tag combos are even simple to pull off—usually, all you have to do to activate them is to tap two buttons simultaneously. Of course, getting them to actually work in a truly effective combo takes practice and skill; PJ is hardly a button-masher.

**One aspect of this setup that** Capcom has drastically changed—and seems to be changing in all of its fighting games—is the control configuration. Now there are only four attack buttons: weak and fierce punches, and weak and fierce kicks. After seeing how well this setup works in Marvel 2 and Capcom Vs. SNK, we are honestly happy that Capcom favors this control system; those two

middle buttons now seem to be completely unnecessary.

And to keep players coming back for more, Capcom (as usual) has included a number of modes like Training, Story, Versus, and Survival modes. In order to unlock and obtain all of the secret characters and good stuff, you'll have to earn points in a purchasing system, as in Marvel Vs. Capcom 2.

**And those of you who disliked** the unique look of the other games will be delighted to know that, although the goofy character designs are still the same, fighting is set in a darker, more serious atmosphere. Hopefully, this, in addition to very decent graphics, will attract a larger audience (although really,



### Rival Schoolers Unite

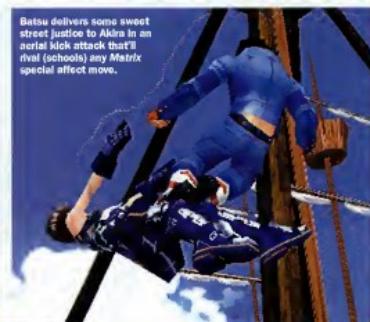
With its ultra-cutesy premise and quirky characters, it's no wonder that the Rival Schools series has become a cult favorite among fighting enthusiasts. Capcom Japan even went so far as to sponsor a fanart contest on its website for Bounding Justice Academy otaku, who flocked to do their own renditions of Battsu, Shoma and the rest of the gang. For US fans, the site to keep an eye on is definitely the Rival Schools Network, which lists pretty much everything you'd ever want to know about the various students, teachers and miscellaneous bizarre characters that populate the series. Go to <http://www.teletagged.com/index.shtml> to get properly schooled.



Part of Project Justice's appeal stems from each team's 'Intro' and back story. In Japan, a whole manga series has been built off the fighting series—and we can understand why.



Batsu delivers some sweet street justice to Akira in an aerial kick attack that's rival (schools) any Matrix special effect move.



Another aspect of the series' draw for fans is the number of wacky specials and story points. After all, this is a game based around the premise that high school students are all about knocking the snot out of each other to defend their school's honor or something. Anyhow, thanks to this game's new characters, its storyline is clearly going to be playing a central role; and story points simply make good sense.

### The Momo Factor

ALL FAN WORKS WITH Capcom has a single, simple hook for throwing an offbeat, whacked-out character just to add some 'charm' in each of their games. This is a phenomenon we've conveniently labeled "The Momo Factor." Resident Evil has Hunk and Tofu, while Street Fighter has Dhalsim and Blanka, and the Megaman series has...well, all the characters are a little strange. Project Justice has Momo, a sweet-sounding name that's a peacock for hustlers out with dastardly combos and a name that ought to belong to either a mobster or a gorilla.



gameplay itself ought to be enough to capture the hearts of true gamers—come on, people, it's not like we're asking you to eat, like, a truckload of yams, or something! This really is an awesome series).

**Capcom remembered to add** all of the extra stuff and tweak the control interface, but there are still some pretty significant problems that have yet to be addressed. First, it's quite clear that the company's 3D games tend to lack the tight, feeling of speed and precision that you'll see in any of its 2D fighters. And thus far, Project Justice is no exception. For example, whenever characters jump, they seem to float—which makes landing

two-in-ones from the air way too difficult. Also, chain combos and air combos are sluggish—i.e., the lag time between tapping the buttons and seeing the action appear onscreen is too long.

### Ironically, the problems

Inherent in Capcom's 3D games seem to be caused by the fact that they're all based on 2D precedents. Capcom has simply taken the formulas established in 2D and thrown them into the 3D ring, without allowing for the difference in mediums. And besides proving that this method of 2D-to-3D transition just doesn't work correctly, this narrow, 2D-based mentality has caused innovation throughout the

realm of fighting games to stagnate. If Capcom truly wants to revolutionize this genre again, it'll have to start with the question, "What does 3D mean to me?" and not treat that third dimension like an afterthought. —CHET BARBER

## Official Macromedia Dreamcast

PUBLISHER CAPCOM DEVELOPER CAPCOM GAMES / FIGHTING DIVISION / JAPAN PLAYERS / 2 ONLINE RELEASE DATE FEBRUARY

**PLUSES [+]**  
Unique character designs, new control interface, lots of secret stuff, cool soundtrack, lots of combos

**MINUSES [-]**  
Not a whole lot of innovative features  
**BOTTOM LINE [ ]**  
With decent controls, tons of combos, a variety of characters, and Justice League surely will not disappoint fans



The action is way more frenetic than in your average Sega Fighting game, although it's still a little calmer than in some of Capcom's 2D blow-outs. Check out the lighting effect on this hit blow, and the style of armor—all of it can be blown off with the appropriate hits.



Somewhere between Virtua Fighter and Soul Calibur lies Fighting Vipers. Most of the attacks are hard to land, but when you combat via brawling, you get to do all sorts of acrobatics. Each character has a few special moves, and if he (or she) is holding on to an object, this object is usually what the move involves. Check out the body-monitor next to the power bar: It monitors your armor status.

# Fighting Vipers 2

The return—and certainly not the tomb—of the unknown classic

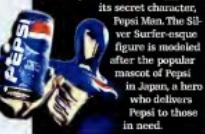
**A**lthough the sands of time have erased Fighting Vipers from most gamers' memories, true fans revere the arcade brawler (and its great Saturn conversion) as a high water mark in fighting. With its use of items like skateboards as weapons and its wonderfully destroyable walls, it featured innovations not seen again until games like Power Stone and DOA 2 erupted. Even better, it offered a huge amount of fun and freneticism (is that a word?) [No, but we'll let it slide.—Ed.] without being a button masher, which made it a great counterpoint to the

austerity and subtlety of a game like Virtua Fighter.

Now, after years of neglect, a sequel is finally coming to DC. While no US release date has been discussed, it's a pretty sure bet that the game will make the

## Pepsi Man-san!

ONE OF THE COOLEST FEATURES in the Japanese version of FV was its secret character, Pepsi Man. The Silver Surfer-esque figure is modeled after the popular mascot of Pepsi in Japan, a hero who delivers Pepsi to those in need.



jump from Japan—if it's only half again as good as the original.

**True to form,** Fighting Vipers 2 keeps the gameplay fast and furious. Interactive walls put in another appearance—to affect gameplay, once again—and the clever armor system returns, too.

Basically, each character starts off the game wearing "armor". Each suit is statistically appropriate for each character, so it doesn't always look like the shiny stuff that medieval knights used to wear. And it doesn't make you invincible—it simply offers some protection during the early stages, at the cost of some limitations to fighting moves. In

fact, you may need either to let the other character smash it off, or your character slowly (or quickly, depending on the ferocity of the attack), or throw it off yourself. In any case, watching it fly across the arena adds some serious visual punch to matches—as does the ability to explode walls and to throw characters right through them. You can even finish a match by smashing your opponent with a meteor!

The game features five modes: Arcade, Versus, Survival, Training and Random, and there's also supposed to be an Internet option—although we don't expect actual online play. So. Two years after the release of the

arcade version of FV2, the only question is whether a conversion can stand up against Soul Calibur and DOA 2. We'll find out soon!

CHRISTOPHE KAGOTANI

## Dreamcast

PUBLISHER SEGA DEVELOPER SEGA DREAMCAST SYSTEMS NUMBER OF PLAYERS 2 ONLINE MODE RELEASE DATE 2001 WEBSITE [www.sega.com/dreamcast/games/fv2/](http://www.sega.com/dreamcast/games/fv2/)

### PLUSES [-]

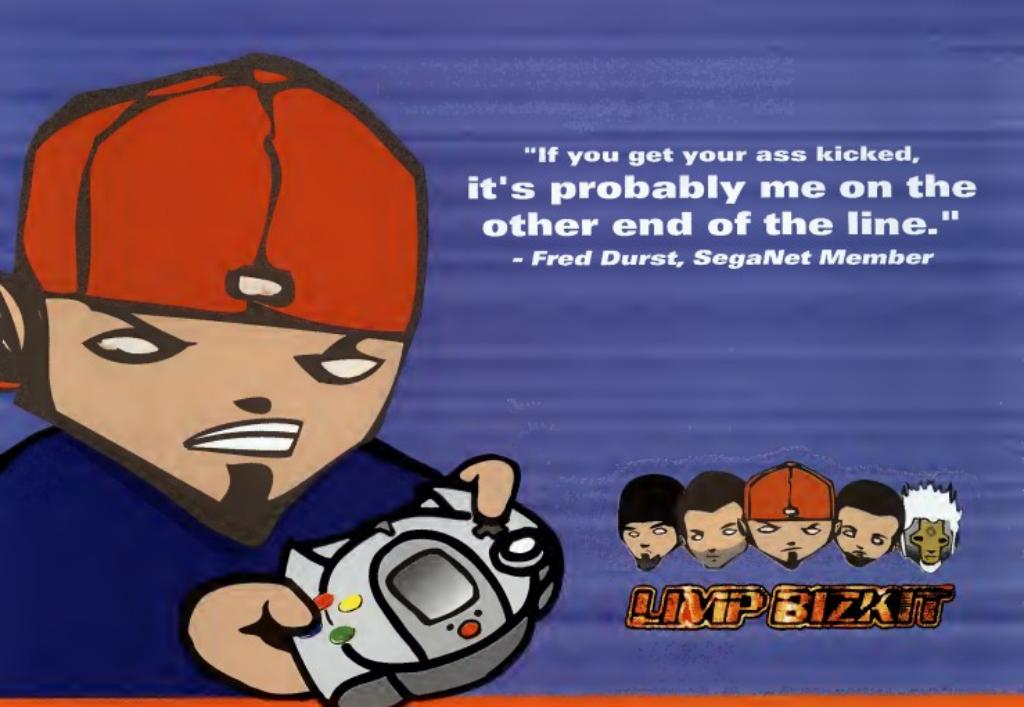
Tons of action, fast pace; armor and walls make innovative additions

### MINUSES [-]

Warning: may be a mile wide, but only an inch deep.

### BOTTOM LINE [-]

It should look great, but will all gamers like the fighting style? Time will tell... .



**"If you get your ass kicked,  
it's probably me on the  
other end of the line."**

- Fred Durst, *SegaNet Member*



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"Hi, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Head Hunter, a bounty hunter in futuristic San Francisco. I go around riding my motorcycle and shooting bad people. Oh, and did I mention that you can bounce a quarter off my rock hard abs? No?"



# Head Hunter

Mr. Fett, take off that tiara—we're passing the crown to a new bounty hunter

**O**ne of the most tantalizing surprises that Sega slipped into its recent E3 lineup—bursting with denials, disclaimers, and the PR equivalent of a flashing neon sign saying "Keep Out!"—was a mysterious little title called Head Hunter. Rather fittingly, it was being developed in the snowy wastes of northern Europe by Swedish company, Amuze. But beyond a handful of screenshots and some rough video footage, little else was revealed about the game. Until now.

**Taking place in a fully-realized** 3D world, Head Hunter mixes an unlikely story with some very

promising gameplay details in order to give gamers a sneak peek at what the world would be like if the ESRB Rating Board replaced the government. Sound interesting? It is.

Head Hunter welcomes gamers to an altered US of the near-future, wherein governmental censorship has placed a strangle-hold on the culture and law enforcement lands in the hands of private contractors called "Head hunters."

You enter this new world as a shady, shades-sportin' bounty hunter. It's your job to make sure that those wacky kids aren't sneaking any violence into their videogames or movies. The role is double-edged, in

that you'll be using violence to enforce a no-violence law...which is kind of a weird contradiction, but (or therefore)

it makes the whole premise just that much more realistic.

There'll be plenty of evil factions to take down, through

a long and difficult process—which will somehow enable our hero, in the end, to dismantle the overbearing censorship laws altogether. Sounds pretty compelling...but you have to remember that these tidbits are little more than conjecture as *Head Hunter* is still so incredibly early in its development.

**With a storyline that's so** fuzzy around the edges at this point, it's the gameplay and the concept that remain the game's strong suits. As evidenced by these screens, you'll have a choice between how you'd like to travel to your various rendezvous points during the game: by foot or by motorcycle. And



**Is it us, or is Lorenzo "Renegade" Lamas the perfect person to be playing head hunter?** Barring that, we recommend former PCXL editor Mike Salmon. Mike used to have that Renegade 'do, and while he's cut his hair to catch up with the times (unlike Lorenzo), he's still got just the right amount of style and machismo for the role. Plus, since leaving PCXL, Mike has been working as a bounty hunter in San Francisco—although he usually drives a Jeep, not a motorcycle. Of course, he's married: that explains everything.



'The details in Head Hunter are supposed to immerse you in an 'interactive movie'.' FRANCESCA REYES



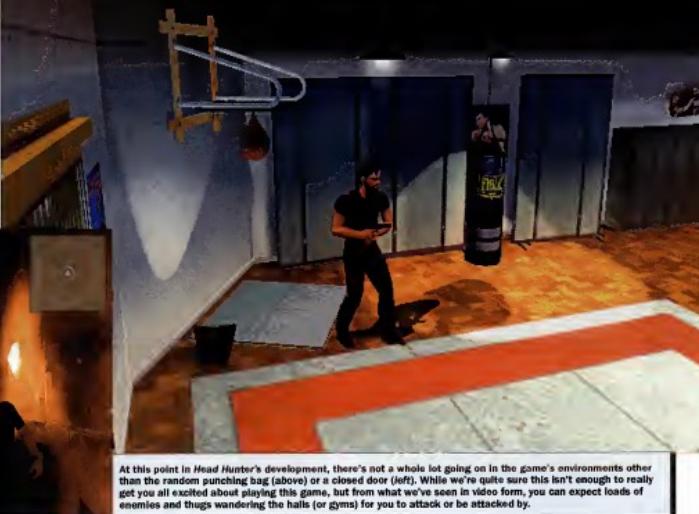
#### Bathroom Hunter

This poor soul looks like he's eaten a few too many Chicken Crisper lunches at Chili's; he's holding his gut tighter than Evan holds onto reviewable Disney games. In this screen, he finds (at last) what he has been searching for—the bathroom. Unfortunately, it seems like the stall is occupied. Hope he can hold it—or else, "Clean up on Aisle 4, please!"

Let's hope this game is a cross between the Resident Evil series and Shenmue.



After you're done drooling over the reflections in that store window (left), get a load of the sporty bike our hero gets to ride around on. You better get used to it, because it's going to be your main mode of transportation, as well as a nifty way to unlock cool new features and areas in the story mode. Like Mad Max, without the nuclear waste or Mel, Head Hunter also features a tournament "dome." Right on.



At this point in Head Hunter's development, there's not a whole lot going on in the game's environments other than the random punching bag (above) or a closed door (left). While we're quite sure this isn't enough to really get you all excited about playing this game, but from what we've seen in video form, you can expect loads of enemies and thugs wandering the halls (gyms) for you to attack or be attacked by.

transportation isn't the only reason you'll need access to a two-wheeled vehicle. You'll also need your road hog in order to face off with dozens of challengers across the globe in the ominously named Aquadome,

is plotting to include. Cool extras like being able to use your VMU as a "beeper" in order to receive different messages or hints makes great use of an unjustifiably under-used peripheral. You'll also be able to use the Net for more than racing, by downloading numeric codes to access new or secret areas that

are otherwise inaccessible.

All of these details combined are supposed to immerse you up to your earlobes in what Sega deems "an interactive movie." That can mean a lot of different things, both good and bad. If it ends up with the "interactive" feel of, say, Shenmue, then we're all for it. Imagine a

fully realized world populated by various characters that you must talk to and interact with in order to further the action-driven plot. On the other hand, if it means "two minutes of gameplay in between three continuous cinemas," well, forget it. Who knows which way Head Hunter will ultimately jump—but we're hoping for the former.

**Yes, you heard right.** This is where Head Hunter's Internet capabilities come into play: because, in the Aquadome, you'll be racing up to seven other DC owners. If you've got the skills to win, you'll unlock new features and items that will become available to you in the game's story mode. How's that for incentive?

And this is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what Amuze



#### Gratuitous Boba Fett Boxout #03

As a bounty hunter poster boy, Boba Fett may have a few lessons to teach our lead character in Head Hunter. Because, we don't know all the details of the game yet, but we can tell you exactly what these lessons might be about: but that isn't what you really want to see here, anyway, is it? You just want another Star Wars-related sidebar, and that's all we're gonna need to suffice one. Here's a question: do the pages of **Dreamcast** contain more meaningless references to SW or to Yuji Naka?

pages of **Dreamcast**—we'll be sure to tell you how it's coming along.

FRANCESCA REYES

Official Magazine  
**Dreamcast**,  
PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: JAMUS, DENNIS  
ACTION/ADVENTURE/DRIVEN/EUROPE PLAY-  
ERTS/3D/ONLINE/YES RELEASE DATE: 2001

#### PLUSES [+]

Loads of realistic environments and lots of potential. As it stands right now, the ambition level here is amazing.

#### MINUSES [-]

Whether or not that ambition level will be met, we don't know. Early footage showed the game running slowly and sparsely, but the key word is "early."

#### BOTTOM LINE [...]

If we had to put money on whether or not it'll turn out lovely, we'd bet YES. Sega usually comes through with the goods.



Check out the handles in the lower corners (left); you'll quickly develop a "rep"—good or bad—among other players. The graphic effects (above) are totally sweet, especially the alien slime.



# Alien Front Online

In this part of the space 'hood, everyone can hear you scream...

**A**lien Front Online features a hackneyed plot, done-before gameplay, and a bafflingly unimpressive array of vehicles and weapons. And it should be number-one on your most-wanted list. Confused? Try looking at the third word in the title. *Online*. Okay. Now hold this thought while we get through the part that doesn't actually sound that great.

In a burst of extra-terrestrial originality, the alien Triclops have decided to come to Earth, enslave (and probably eat) humanity, devastate the planet, drive slow in the fast lane and any other of a host of antisocial actions. Not surprisingly, it falls to you and your team of crack tank-drivers to stop the great.

madness by fighting massive armored battles across Tokyo, Washington DC and other places where humans and aliens traditionally clash.

That's right. You drive a tank, fighting against organic, living, tank-like alien mechs. And yes, we just said alien twice. You get the idea, though. In the arcade version, you control your tank with real tank-style controls, but since we have no twin sticks in the US, on Dreamcast, you'll just have to use your D-pad.

**Now here's the cool part:** not only has the gameplay reached a level of transcendental sublimity that we haven't seen in the arcade since *Tokyo Wars* from Namco, but you actually

can play online in teams of up to four human tanks versus four alien tanks. And you can play in any combination of arcade machines versus

Dreamcasts. And you have your own permanent online handle that you can use at home or in the arcade. AND, thanks to Sega's new Dream Call technology, you can talk—in realtime—to everyone else who's playing. Call in orders to your teammates. Taunt your enemies. Cry for help. Beg for mercy. Shout in triumph or scream in defeat.

Although the game is a fine single-player experience, anyone who's played it in the arcade can tell you that the close-in levels, blind alleys and killing fields beg for team-

mates, which ever side you're playing on. Being able to speak to your mates (you can either limit communication to team members or talk trash with everyone playing) adds an entirely new element, making the game just that much more immersive and enabling a new level of strategy in the play.

**Luckily, too, the speech feature** occurs against the backdrop of an impeccably designed game. We took some shots a minute ago at the conventionality of gameplay, but in fact, it makes sense. This is your traditional tank combat

game. You can choose (on either side) from three tanks, with the predictable speed-armor-weapons tradeoffs. There are the predictable power-ups—tactical nukes, flamethrowers, homing missiles, hellfires, and grenade launchers for the humans, and gravity balls, guided drones, cloaking spores and meteor showers for the Triclops.

But—and this is crucial—A) this doesn't mean the game is bad. It possesses amazingly designed levels, and the control (at least in the arcade) is astonishingly good, making it one of the better tank games.



The justification of realistic war machine and alien, organic alien tanks is pretty cool (left). Tokyo gets destroyed again (above). Alien goop in the capital? Believe it (top left). At least the aliens are honest about their plans for the citizens of earth (top right).

## Tank Combat Past

The first tank combat game was Atari's innovatively titled coin-op, *Tank*. (Trivia: it was the first post-*Frogger* arcade hit.) It basically sported the same gameplay as the 2600 pack-in game, *Combat*: you control a tank and shoot bullets at another tank. Sometimes the bullets would ricochet off the walls and obstacles, and sometimes the tanks (or shots) would be invisible. The next major milestone was Namco's scrolling, scaling, top-down arcade masterpiece *Assault*—the gameplay was pretty much the same, but things were much prettier. After that, Namco again moved things forward with *Tokyo Wars*—a networkable full-size arcade 3D tank combat cabinet. PC player got into the online act with the insanely multi-player *Tanarus* (Trivia: this was the game Verant did just before EverQuest), but it took the Dreamcast to add real voice communication to the mix.



we've played. And B) if you're going to add in 4-player team play, it's better, we'd argue, to add this new element to an established play style than to expect gamers to learn a whole new type of game at the same time that they're having to employ real team-play strategy for what may be the very first time.

Graphically, this is a first party Dreamcast game—which means that it looks great, which the levels look great, and there are tons of weapons and lighting effects to keep things interesting. Human vehicles (M1A1 tank, Merkava, and M-109) all look like their real world counterparts, and the alien vehicles (two-legged walker, four-legged spider walker and hoverdrone)

look a lot like the Grey ships you probably saw a hundred times on field trips to Area 51 when you were a kid.

### Despite the challenges of B-

player online play, animations are also smooth and super-fast. The levels are small, but perfectly formed for maximum carnage in fighting—and everything in the level is destructible; you can indeed blow your way through buildings. The overall feeling is *Beirut '86*: dodging for cover, moving to cover your buddies, and kicking some serious alien ass in tight urban quarters.

Planned Dreamcast enhancements include extra weapons and vehicles, new deathmatch maps, and a

brand new story mode. Plus, you can bring your VMU to the arcade, unlock special secrets and then take them home and use them on your Dreamcast version. So.

*AlienFront Online?* Cool.  
CHRIS CHARLA

## Dreamcast.

PUBLISHER: SEGA DYNASTY GAMES  
RELEASE DATE: JAPAN: PLAYERS: 1-4 ONLINE: DUE MAY 2001

### PLUSES [+]

Voice chat, 8-player combat mayhem, arcade + DC play, etc.

### MINUSES [-]

Tank combat is done before

### BOTTOM LINE [...]

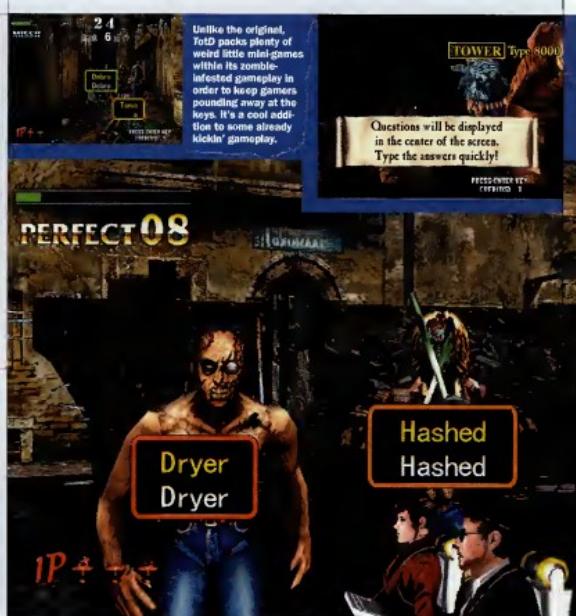
This is gonna be kickin'. We've been waitin' for the opportunity to yell, 'Ben! Go! Ben! He's on your flank!' and have it mean something for years now.



We can't think of a better word to describe a situation in which a decaying zombie pops out of the water, just as we are trying to save mankind. Rats indeed, good zombie...rats, indeed.

#### Mavis Beacon: Typist ... or Zombie?

EVERYONE LOVES MAVIS and her extremely helpful typing programs. If it weren't for Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing Ver. 9 on Macintosh, we'd all be handwriting our reviews and thus forcing you, dear reader, to decipher them with your own purple dittoed prints. But imagine our surprise when we discovered that Mavis Beacon is nothing more than a fictional avatar (a la Bartles & James) created by the software company to put a smiley face on those wonderful tutorials! We were actually kind of hoping to expose her as a zombie, but instead she's merely nonexistent...which is just as good, right?



Unlike the original, TotD packs plenty of weird little mini-games within its zombie-infested gameplay in order to keep gamers pounding away at the keys. It's a cool addition to some already kickin' gameplay.

Questions will be displayed in the center of the screen. Type the answers quickly!

FEEDBACK KEY  
FIREARM 1

Hashed  
Hashed

# Typing of the Dead

Zombies and literacy: two great tastes that taste great together

**U**Typing and zombies... rarely (okay, never) have the twain met in such a strange venue as Sega's upcoming Typing of the Dead, a near-remake of its classic arcade-to-DC lightgun shooter, House of the Dead 2. Originally released in Japan in order to promote the use of the DC keyboard, Typing of the Dead was warmly welcomed. But on the our side of the pond, the game has remained little more than an oddity of note (a typed note, of course). But this could change when the game releases Stateside in January.

The premise is exactly the same as the one found in House of the Dead 2: kill various attacking zombies in order to save a town overrun with all sorts

of malodorous undead vermin. The catch is that you'll be doing it all with the aid of your keyboard, instead of with your lightgun or controller. Players will be challenged to quickly type various phrases and words that pop up on the screen in order to fend off the monsters—it's fast, furious

#### Only Typing Can Save Your Life

Gamers typically save your life! Read our three-pronged argument and judge for yourself.

Reason #1. Deadlines on DBCM. The faster you type, the less you are in danger of being decapitated by Diana's flying scissor kick.

Reason #2. Money. Face it—unless you're some genius supreme, you're gonna need to have some typing skills to earn any real middle management cash in this lifetime. And although middle management can be seen as the working equivalent of zombification, at least...well, damn. There really isn't any justification for middle management.

Reason #3. If you've ever hacked into NORAD, you know it's true that fast typing can save your life and those of millions of innocent humans. Remember War Games?

Remember War Games?

and educational enough to make any junior high school typing teacher proud.

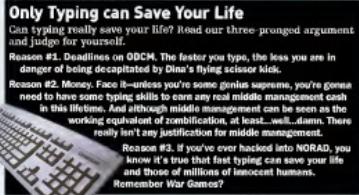
**E**verything in the game has been adjusted to suit the new periperal as well, including in-game cinemas featuring the cast of heroes donning DC backpacks

and strap-on keyboards instead of guns. Boy, is it a sight to cherish.

And while it may sound slightly silly, the actual gameplay is tough, challenging and pretty damn fun. Even the most seasoned typists, who've honed up on their skills by writing thesis-style emails (mostly to us, it seems) on their DC keyboards will find it difficult to flaunt the blazingly fast skills necessary for taking down multiple enemies—a task which generally requires the lightning-speed entry of words like "Zimbabwe" or phrases like "Everyone played allegiance to a corn dog pagan god." (Okay, so we made that last one up, but it's comparable to what you'll find in the game.)

If you have a keyboard and

you're never far from home with the omnipotent net-lightgun antics of House of the Dead 2, this may just be your ticket to enjoying one of the best zombie rides on DC. Typing is the ultimate niche game to master. And no, we're not joking. FRANCESCA REYES



Official Magazine  
**Dreamcast**

PUB: SEGA DREAMCAST GENRE: SURVIVAL SHOOTER / ACTION / PLATFOR

PERIPH: KEYBOARD / LIGHTGUN RELEASE: JAN

#### PLUSES [+]

The next best thing to a lightgun shoot-em-up, without the lightgun or the shotgun.

#### MINUSES [-]

Lim, this isn't an established genre?

#### BOTTOM LINE [...]

Clearly, Sega is committed to bringing all flavors of DC weirdness Stateside. Call us strange, but we're stoked

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# TEST ZONE



Note to Shaq: Eat it.



# NBA 2K1

Throw one down

**L**ast November, Visual Concepts released NBA 2k to a fairly muted response. It was arguably the best basketball game ever developed, yet under the Godzilla-sized shadow of VC's own NFL 2k, the title was somewhat overlooked. Complaints were lodged against its unnecessary animation sequences (which slowed the pace of the game), some all-too-ineffective dribble moves, and frequent play-stopping collisions on dribble drives...essentially, there were all kinds of game-play elements that simply lacked the polish and finesse of a truly A-plus title.

Fortunately, this year's sequel has addressed most

of these gripes very much like John Starks addressed Michael Jordan and Horace Grant in the '93 playoffs: "Sorry 'bout kicking your ass, there. Did it hurt, sucker?"

**G**ameplay is in many ways similar to that of last year's version, with the analog stick and button combinations remaining essentially unchanged. What makes a huge difference, however, is the number of refinements that VC has made to its old, established formula—the developer has managed to tune some basic features quite nicely, and, in doing so, has made the game significantly more playable. Among the offensive



Ewing with the fadeaway 15-footer. You can't stop him. You can only hope to contain him.

# Welcome to TESTZONE

## ODCM's Electoral Review College

If there's one thing that the review staff at ODCM isn't, it's unfair. This ain't no stinkin' monarchy, bub. Instead, it's a finely crafted system with loads of checks and balances. So, in essence, everything from Evan's crazy street lingo to Greg Orlando's obsession with Boba Fett gets an equal chance to reach the public. And we hand-count, too. God bless America.

### GREG ORLANDO

Reviewer, Resident Evil 2, Super Runabout

What can we say about Greg that we haven't already posted in every single past issue of ODCM? Well, we could say that he's the original "Bad Memory Jimmo," but that would be a lie. Instead, let's just settle for the fact that he's a man who loves zombies. Not that kind of love, but the love between a mother and son. Gaze.

### CHRIS CHARLA

Reviewer: Hoyle's Casino, Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

True story: Chris loves oldschool gaming and all things thereof, thus this issue's review of *Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness*. But wait, there's more! He's also a fan of *Resident Evil 2*, so his review journey even more. We can't say that we're not scared by his knowledge, but hey—at least they have a video game, right?

### GARRETT KENYON

Reviewer: Final Fantasy VII, Kiss Psycho, Circus Horror or PGL editor, Garrett Kenyon would like to state for the record that he's not into games simply for the gore or the shooting. He actually prefers mature simulations that feature unknowns and terrors when he's not trading sticks with his pals. He especially likes the potty stickers of Samwise characters.

### DR. JAMES PRESTON

Reviewer: Surf Rocket Racer, BANG!, Gunship Elite

You may remember James from such ODCM reviews as *Metroplex Street Racer* and *The Ring: Tigar's Reck*, but this time around he's got a new found passion. He's been playing *BANG!* and has fallen in love with it. It's a little pelt action in *Circus Horror*. He may not say too much about the game, but he loves it.

### EVAN SHAMROCK

Reviewer: Final Fantasy VII, 2 Rumble Round 2

Unknown fact: ODCM's own Evan Shamrock is one of the most notorious freelancers in the business, which made him a perfect choice for reviewing *NBA 2K1* and *Ready 2 Rumble 2*. He's also a big Patrick Ewing fan, and he cited like a little girl when Ewing was traded to the Sonics.

## Our Scoring System

No, pal, not that kind of scoring system. If it were, we sure wouldn't give it away for free—we'd be selling it in the back of *Metroplex* for \$29.95. And Evan would be a pain in the butt.

We score games on a scale of 1 to 10. When we believe a game is just average, we give it 5 out of 10. If it's appeal is almost entirely based on its looks or its set, but is not something that will be enjoyed by everyone, it gets 6 out of 10. And if we've even added a spiffy new scoring system for graphics, sound, and gameplay, it gets 7.

Peripherals are another story. Since it doesn't make much sense to score a VMU or an extension cord on a 1-to-10 scale, we've created an incredibly clever and cute smiley-face scoring system. We hope you'll find it self-explanatory.

### Dream Game Award\*

With Dreamcast's promising software lineup, we wanted to hand-pick to pick a game every month that stands out and beyond the call of greatness. For this singular type of game, we've concocted our special award: the Dream Game Award. The title that is so duly honored is guaranteed to go to, no matter who you are or what type of game you like to play. An essential purchase.

\* Small print somewhere in this mag assures your legal agreement to buy all Dream Game Award titles immediately.

### 10 instant classic

### 9 phenomenal

### 8 excellent

### 7 good

### 6 for fans

### 5 average

### 4 mediocre

### 3 flawed

### 2 its mom loves it

### 1 coaster



The Human Highlight Film returns (top). There are plenty of moments in *NBA 2K1* where you'll be watching a replay with your mouth agape, saying something along the lines of, "Ohmygod. This rules."

improvements is the greatly improved post-up game. Backing your opponent down with your back to the basket is now a far more accessible option, and the war in the paint is now significantly more realistic. Players make use of their bodies to effectively establish position, and now have several options available to them from the post position. The move to a quick turnaround jumpshot is both simple and efficient, and it actually makes the post-up game a viable option for players who choose this form of attack.

As opposed to NBA 2K, crossovers and spin moves are now extremely effective. Rather than simply providing a visual representation of the move, they actually serve to get you



### Take it outside!

ONE OF THE MOST entertaining options created especially for *NBA 2K*'s sequel is the new Street mode. Taking a page from real life, this feature enables you to hold court over various forums, including a public park and inner-city blacktops. For the record, Evan would like to state his opinion—in print—that the Knicks' management has single-handedly destroyed one of the hard-working, on-court achieving and downright coolest basketball teams of all time. Tip this back Ewing, Oakley and Starks, ditch Glen Rice and Tricia Knight, and win the big fella's championship. Poof.

around your defender in convincingly realistic fashion. Players make much better cuts without the ball, and taking jumpers with a man up in your grill is an altogether bad idea: Expect a nasty rejection letter, delivered promptly via airmail. Oh—and just wait until you see the swat blocks...

This year, players can also more effectively control the tempo of the game. While the emphasis is still on speed, quick hits and transition offenses, players can slow the action down if they want—and the on-point passing means that getting into a half-court set and hitting the open man for a jumper is a very feasible proposition. Making that jumpshot,



As of this writing, the 76ers are 8-0; this is especially impressive considering the fact that just a few years ago, the '76ers had a total of nine wins over the course of an entire 82-game season. Nothing a little shot of superstardom (read: Iverson) can't fix.

Gervin gets his swerve-in. Aside from a little finger-roll, the iceman can also throw down poster-inducing facials such as this one. We want to know what's up with gorilla-man down there in the front row.



## NETWORK PLAY

NBA 2K1's NETWORK INTERFACE is more polished than that of its NFL counterpart. Players can set several filters, including the opponent's rate filter, keyboard filter and game mode filter (street, exhibition, or both) to find the most suitable online matchups. The game also has ten chat macros, which can be assigned to keyboard buttons for quick trash-talking during play.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the action itself, VC's b-ball game doesn't have quite the flow that NFL 2K1 accomplished with its online play. The primary reason for this—aside from the ever-present lag issue—is the fact that basketball is much more of a twitch sport than football (well, at least when you're using your thumbs and a control pad to play it). Because of the relatively small margin for error—in either making a defensive play or hitting a jumpshot—things can get a bit touchy. So when there's lag, unless you anticipate where your opponent is going at the precise moment that he attempts to go there, you can consider yourself toasted. Same goes for jumpers: the millisecond delay changes the moment of release from the apex of your jump to a split-second before or after.

But in the end, the quality of your online experience depends on your connection (and your opponent's connection as well). When we played, there were times when things went swimmingly—while at other times, the jerky action made us want to fling the controller away.

however, is more difficult. Like last year's game, NBA 2K1 demands that players release the shoot button precisely at the apex of their jump, or else risk taking a trip to Brick City. While it is reasonable to accede that developers should be able to count on players having at least some skill at hitting a jump shot, we were surprised at the number of reliable shooters who missed open jumpers.

NBA 2K1 retains its Season, Franchise, Exhibition, Turnney, Practice and Quick Start modes, and adds Street and Network options to the fray as well. While it might seem merely tacked-on, the Street mode is a spectacularly entertaining addition. Gamers get to ball on real-life blacktops like The Cage in NYC and Franklin Park in Chicago, and each of the street courts is depicted in near photo-realistic detail. Players compete in a variety

of different matchup options, from NBA Jam-style up-tempo two-on-two contests to more traditional, NBA-style five-on-five games. This mode captures the essence of street hoops very well, with passing cars and trash-talking providing the ambient noise.

Still, for as long as they have been around, basketball games have lagged several steps behind the quality of their gridiron counterparts—and sadly, this one is no different. While it remains the best console basketball game on the market (by a landslide), NBA 2K1 frustrates for several reasons. Many of the AI routines are simply too strict; gameplay is hampered by an inordinate number of steals, and player collision boxes are bigger than they should be. This often leads to a fair amount of awkward bumping and shoving when you attempt to bring the ball into the paint, and makes

defense more of a hit-and-miss affair than the straight-up sort of kill-by-skill that it should be.

Far from being just a statistical update, yet not quite perfect, NBA 2K1 is clearly the best console b-ball game ever made: it's an absolute must-play for sports fans. EVAN SHAMDON

Official Magazine  
**Dreamcast**

PUBLISHER: SEGA DEVELOPER: VISUAL CONCEPTS  
GENRE: SPORTS / PLAYSTATION 1 RELEASE DATE: NOW  
HARDWARE: DREAMCAST / ONLINE: YES

### GRAPHICS 9

Animating predators, great player models

### \_SOUND\_ 8

Quality voice sounds, good commentary

### CONTROL 8

Has momentary lags, but overall very good

### GAMEPLAY 9

It's not perfect, but this is the best b-ball game

**Score: 9**

# Wanna play?



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"Right! Left! Right! Illegally-sharpened hairdo stab!"



Afro Thunder goes head-to-head (well, more like head-to-head) with Shaq Diesel. True Story: Midway staged an event in Las Vegas, in which the real Afro and Shaq squared off in the ring to play a match of Round 2 on the big screen.



# Ready2Rumble: Round 2

Don't call it a comeback. Midway smacks us upside the head once again

**S**ubtlety comes in many forms. We here at **ODCM** can safely say, however, that Midway's Ready2Rumble series is not one of these forms. Round 2 brings back all of the ridiculously over-the-top antics that made the first game such a gem, and adds to it a host of improvements—mostly in the form of more/more/more. And while the game certainly won't give anyone who didn't care for the original title anything to write home about, the sequel proves to be a worthy successor. It's a damn good shot of mindless entertainment.

## True to form, Round 2

diligently continues Midway's legacy of pick-up-and-play gaming, eliciting such hard-hitting, hyphenated descriptions as "smash-mouth" and "in-your-

face" from game journalists nationwide (young truly included, apparently). This is straight-up twitch-gaming for the masses—Round 2 effectively translates the sweet science into the sweet violence, while holding on (albeit loosely) to all of the fundamental rules and principles of the sport. It may be all hopped up on goofballs, but it's still boxing. So, please: no kicking.

**When it was first displayed** to the public in the months leading up to Dreamcast's launch, the original Ready2Rumble blew gamers away with its shiny, polished visuals and wonderfully engaging personality. Characters came to life (by beating one another to a pulp: ain't it grand?), and imbued the

game with a look that was all its own—and distinctly next-generation. Punches landed with an immensely satisfying quoutient of "whap", and the skin on opponents' faces wibbled and bruised accordingly. Heads snapped realistically in whatever direction they were

punched, and each round's progress was recorded in cuts, bruises and sunburn bodily redecoration. Of course, while all of this made for an enjoyable slugfest, the depth of play wasn't far removed from an exceptionally good match of Rock 'Em-Sock 'Em Robots.

**Midway's attempt to address** this problem comes in the form of much-improved character AI, more advanced moves and a slightly deeper fighting model. Beating up on the computer is far more of a challenge than it was last year, requiring a somewhat deeper mastery of the game's controls—button mashing will simply not put your opponent down for the count, no matter how many punches per minute your fists of steel can throw.

Instead, players will have to come to grips with multiple-button attacks and combinations, and get good and agile at using the dodge button. It takes more than a little bit of the old rope-a-dope to get through this one (that's right, the computer will now not only attempt to back you into a corner, but will

## New Kids on the Knock Your Block Off

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 introduces some not-so-all-too-familiar folks:





Michael Jackson certainly has a big enough target to hit in Big Mama Tua. What's cool (from a cinematic point of view, though one can always make you toes curl up in horror) is when it's played on a VGA monitor, Round 2's level of detail allows you to see the individual stretch-marks on Mama's body. The game has a shiny, polished look that reminds us a lot of Rocky IV.



David Lee Roth would kill for these purple ankle-warmers...and so would Dina. The level of detail in Round 2's costumes and environments is impressive: check out the scuff marks on this floor, for instance.



aggressively attempt to fight it's way out of whatever corner you've backed it into).

**In terms of bulk, Round 2** has signed several new boxers to its list, the most recognizable of whom are King of Pop Michael Jackson and fab movie star Shaquille O'Neal. Eleven of the game's original boxers make a return—all with new costumes—and another five newbies round out the pugilistic lot. Each of these cats has been equipped with a new menu of taunt and victory animations, as well—the quality of which is fairly disappointing. Midway must've hired some Rogaine-popping LA producer-type guy to supply the "attitude"; the resulting barrage of '90s-chic, over-the-top ethnic stereotyping is stale from the get-go—particularly since most of these utterances weren't even funny.

Graphically, the game has seen only marginal upgrades: textures seem cleaner, character animation has been smoothed out a bit and little touches like bouncing afro have been added to embellish the visuals. And several new camera angles—notably the Telephoto lens—give these graphics a nice new sheen.

The poorly-recorded voices and a lack of any in-game music don't especially help matters, however—and neither do the obtrusively long load-times between matches. It's never wise to slow the pace of a game that is based almost entirely upon its frantic, non-stop pacing.

This Round does come out swinging with additional modes, including Tournament (which can accommodate up to eight players!) and Team Battle, in which you join one other person

to battle up to eight opposing boxers in a last-man-standing series of bouts.

Also worth noting is the game's new-and-improved training mode, which includes a fully 3D trainee and sparring practice against a passive AI opponent. Mini-games include stair-climbing, jump rope, aerobics, weightlifting, swing bag, heavy bag and speed bag. These are mildly entertaining diversions, in a Space-Channel-5-without-the-style kinda way, and they're necessary steps in your journey to the championship mode. The only bad thing was that it kept reminding us to get out and get busy with some real-life exercise instead of sitting at our computers. Which we clearly didn't do. Oh, well.

**As in Round 1, the key to** winning is timing: if you're not on your game and picking your

spots, you'll be kissing canvas faster than you can say "Floats like a butterfly, stings like a bee." The original game's Rumble punch has returned, and can now be built up three times over—with each build, of course, being more powerful than the last. If you manage to build up your Rumble meter all the way, you can stage massive comebacks in even the most dire of circumstances. This feature, along with the fact that taunting can now build up your Rumble meter as well, adds a great deal more depth to the game.

**Perhaps the most disappointing** thing about Ready2Rumble: Round 2 is its lack of online multiplayer capacity. With a game like this—after Midway has had a full year to figure out how to implement online support—this feature should have been a no-brainer. Frankly, we think

Midway should have gone the extra mile; we would have enjoyed beating our overseas amigos to a pulp. Still, there's satisfaction to be had, here—for both first-time players and Ready 2 Rumble vets alike.

EVAN SHAMOON

## Office In-Magazine Dreamcast.

PUBLISHER MIDWAY DEVELOPER MIDWAY  
GENRE BOXING/BOXER US PLAYERS 1-2 ONLINE  
RELEASE DATE Q3 2001 PRICE \$39.99

**GRAPHICS 9**  
What was already pretty's been improved

**Sound 6**  
Some very sharp voice samples. No music

**Control 8**  
Simple but effective—gets the job done

**Gameplay 7**  
You've played player games. But this is FUN

**Score: 7**

**KNOW WHEN TO RUN**

IT'S A SHAME THAT one of the best elements of the original game has been lost, to be its biggest problem. Since the feel of gambling has as much to do with the players as the play, the addition of NPCs should have upped the fun ante. Instead, it slows the program down so much that even Kenny Rogers wouldn't be able to run or walk quickly away.



This game offers Vegas-style gambling, sans loan sharks and Siegfried and Roy. Which is great, but we do miss those tigers.



# Hoyle Casino

Worth a gamble? (Snicker, snicker.) Don't bother putting on your poker face

**U**here's a lot to like in Hoyle Casino. Unfortunately, there's also a lot to dislike, and it's no sure thing that you'll be able to slog through the disliked parts to get to the good stuff.

First, we'd like to say we don't have anything against Dreamcast games made with the Windows CE operating system—but we do. Why? Hoyle is a perfect example: loading times are long, and the game periodically pauses for a few seconds to load what seems like one or two frames of animation.

But lets go back to the good stuff for a minute. This is an exhaustive casino simulation, with blackjack, craps, pai

gow poker, regular poker (including stud, draw and hold 'em), video poker, roulette, and about a million different slot machines.

**Each of the modes is very**

well done. There are enough options to configure any of the table games to any rules used at any casino we've ever been to, and there's extensive stat-tracking and even a small tutorial for each game. The game supports up to four players, but if you're playing alone, it'll add in NPCs for a real casino feel. Each character has a cartoonish look, a distinctive personality/betting style and a small, unique library of animations and speech.

Unfortunately, this is where the problems start. We liked the idea of the characters—but whenever they're turned on, the program is so damn slow it's almost unplayable. Every hand in blackjack, it seemed, featured at least one major disc-accessing pause. This was just infuriating; it destroyed the very rhythm that makes gambling so fun. To counter this effect, you could turn off all of the characters and animation to speed things up, but then it wasn't much better than playing any of the myriad of free casino games you can find online. The lack of online play was also sorely felt. If we'd been able to play online, things would have

been so much better—but that's the case with just about every new game these days, it seems.

**We liked the stat-tracking**

and we liked the card-counting help in blackjack. The game was fun to play with friends, and it was also a good place to try out some strategies before ODCM's monthly trip to Reno on the Lucky Tours bus with our petty cash fund.

So. Underlying gambling algorithms and variety of games: great. Overlaid interface and character graphics and animation: rubbish. If you're willing to tolerate the slowness and jerkiness of the graphics, this game may well

be worth your \$40. But we wouldn't bet on it. CHRIS CHARLA

## Official Dreamcast Magazine

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY  
GENRE: CASUAL GAMES  
FORMAT: CD-ROM  
PRICE: \$40

**GRAPHICS 2**

jerky, 2D animation with frequent disc access

**CONTROL 6**

Pretty good player comments

**GAMEPLAY 6**

Deep down it's good, but getting there is too hard

**Score: 5**

f e a t u r e s

t r i c k s

t i p s



s c o o p s

p r e v i e w s

r e v i e w s

s t r a t e g i e s



**Imagine Games Group**

consider it covered

PlayStation 2, Dreamcast, Nintendo, and PC, Imagine Games magazines have it all!

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# UNREAL TOURNAMENT

ALSO GOOD

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Animated Blood  
and Gore

LEVEL 10



Dreamcast

PlayStation.2



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Experience dazzling graphics and a multitude of maps and weapons – all in a frame rate so fast, it's Unreal.





Check out these Egyptian themed ghosts—touches like this abound. See those cliffs (below)? Don't worry, you can't fall off them; you are basically stuck in the maze, so platform jumping never really enters the play. If your g-friend is not down with Dreamcast after you've shown her Ulas and Samba, this may do the trick.




**Elite 21 Series**
NEW



### From eating dots to printing dots...

ALTHOUGH SHE'S BEEN A staple mascot for years, the DC iteration of Ms. Pac-Man is actually Namco's first go-round with the title. The original Ms. Pac-Man was created by Namco and released by Epyx/Midway, a company owned GCC Technologies and manufactured by Eddy Midway, distributor of Pac-Man in America. GCC, which was started by a couple of MIT undergrads, it's still around, by the way—it now manufactures and sells laser printers for Macs and PCs. The printers aren't as fun as Ms. Pac-Man, but they're really nice machines (Chris's dad has one; he loves it). Check 'em out at [www.gcctech.com](http://www.gcctech.com).



# Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

## The Material Pac is back!

Sometimes a game so strongly defines a genre that it's impossible to imagine the genre without it. Tony Hawk and skating games. Street Fighter and brawlers. Pac-Man and mazes.

So it's appropriate that nearly 20 years after she entered the scene, Namco's Ms. Pac-Man sticks to her roots. This is maze game, boys and girls. Eat the dots. Avoid the ghosts. Eat the power pellets. Now eat the ghosts.

Of course, Namco has made some changes to bring Ms. Pac-Man into the 21st century. The game is now in 3D, and rather than levels, you have stages and worlds à la Sonic (actually, the stage structure—and in fact the entire game structure—bears a striking resemblance to the PlayStation

game *Ape Escape*), with each of the stages in a world sharing a similar graphical flavor.

As explained in the very nice, traditionally animated intro and cut-scenes, Ms. Pac-Man is sent into these different worlds and times via a special machine created by Professor Pac. Why? If you've played a game before, you won't be surprised to hear that it's to recover the game of virtue, which have been scattered throughout time and space by the ghosts—and if they (the gents) aren't recovered, they threaten to destroy Pac-Land.

Although the levels themselves are maze-based, these aren't the mazes you'd expect to see in Ms. Pac-Man. Like we said, they're in 3D—but they also scroll and feature several new items, including moveable

walls, jump pads, warp zones and more. Completing each maze gets you a star, but to fully beat the game, you'll need to do more than that—you have to beat each level under a certain time and get all the dots, etc. Of



### Mo' GCC Facts

GCC (see boxout above) was also responsible for the creation of the Atari 7800 system, and almost half the games Atari released for the 5200. And *Enduro-Damn*. They're good.

course, once you leave a stage you can always return to try to complete the challenges later.

**Graphically, everything is** sharp and high-res, but polygon counts (and everything else) seems identical to the PlayStation version. It's a pretty simple looking game, so that's not a bad thing. But we would have liked to have seen some Dreamcast flair—lighting effects, better sound—something to distinguish it.

As for the gameplay, it's fun and incredibly easy to get into (making this ideal for playing with kids or your non-game-playing significant-other), but the maze gameplay does start to get a little stale after a few hours. Luckily, cut-scenes are good enough that you'll want to keep going to see them. But

don't be surprised if this game ends up shelved long before you've earned every star. After all, it isn't like you haven't played this game before...

CHRIS CHARLA

### Official *Maze Madness* Dreamcast.

PUB NAMCO BEY NAMCO GENRE MAZE CHASE  
DEVELOPER NAMCO PLAYERS 1-4  
PRICE \$49.99

#### GRAPHICS 7

Cute, simple, but not beyond the PSX version.

#### CONTROL 6

Nice, fast again, nothing missing merely

#### SCORE 8

Analog, emulating. This is pure digital, baby

#### GAMEPLAY 7

Easy to get into, but it can get a little tiring...

**Score: 7**

The crosshairs give you a good view, but there's no way to zoom and the accuracy is severely limited. The end result is one frustrated sniper who looks a lot like you.

HOSTILE WAS KILLED BY BISHOP

M+ 18 6 BISHOP NE TARGET HOSTILE

This night-vision scope lets you attack at night. The hammer of this game is that almost every place is here; it just fails to add up to more than the sum of its parts (especially considering the online part, which isn't that great, either). Still, if you're into tactical combat, it's probably worth a rent to see if you get into it more than we did.



# SpecOps II: Omega Squad

A PC hit and a DC miss—well, actually, a near miss. It kinda grazed us...

**U**t's no surprise that Ripcord's virtual snuck Spec Ops II Omega Squad out the door with little fanfare. With tons of real-world missions and weapons, input from the US Army's first Special Forces team and a well-established product line (Spec Ops I, Spec Ops II, and a Spec Ops add-on pack, all for PC behind it), Omega Squad should be an immediate hit.

Unfortunately, though, it seems that the DC version has taken a back seat to the PC version when it comes to quality. It isn't the graphics—they hold up in competition against visuals in any other DC shooters. And it isn't the gameplay—it's quite satisfying, with a huge number of missions incorporating different objectives to be completed (in fact, we would go so far as to

say that the depth and skill required to master a game like Spec Ops II makes it an entertaining strategy romp). So what's there to complain about? What the game doesn't have.

**First off, a multiplayer mode is** conspicuously absent from the game. Secondly, there is neither hide nor hair of even the remotest semblance of any online support to be found. It may be nitpicky to complain about

such things, but Spec Ops II is hitting stone shelves just as SegNet takes over the DC gaming world (and there's already an online community built around the PC version), and it's a pretty big thing to leave out. Okay, it's a REALLY big thing to leave out.

Another thing absent from play is diagonal strafing—a feature that enables players to push forward and strafe at the same time, in a diagonal motion, thus helping them dodge bullets and

negotiate terrain. This omission makes navigating the landscape difficult when trying to elude sharpshootin' enemies. Also, your crosshair reticle is shamefully inaccurate. It's frustrating to fire off what should be an instant lobotomy shot, only to watch your bullet zing harmlessly over your enemy's shoulder. And the sniper scope doesn't allow players to zoom in and out—you've only got the option of one real close-up view.

## Even with these flaws,

**Omega**

Squad would've been passable only a mere three months ago. But with some awesome tactical military games already available and several stellar new shooters due for release any day now, Omega Squad simply doesn't shine brightly enough to dazzle.

GARRETT KENYON

## View to a Kill

One interesting feature of Spec Ops II Omega Squad is the Drop Camera option, which enables players to drop a camera into a certain spot and to watch the action from that point of view. While it is somewhat difficult to control your character in this mode, it definitely makes for some interesting gameplay moments. Besides that, the game also allows you to play from either first- or third-person points of view.

See this? You should be impressed. Killing people from long range via the scope is actually wickedly difficult.

## Dreamcast

PUBLISHED BY RIBCORD DEVELOPED BY RIBCORD, RAYZ  
PC/MAC GAMES STYLIZED SHOOTER DREAMCAST  
VERSION ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PC AND MAC VNU  
PUBLISHED BY RIBCORD NO CASH PRICE DREAMCAST

### Graphics 6

With some graphics options, the game's visual style is fairly bland.

### Sound 5

While not many shooter fare

### Control 4

Not being able to strafe is perhaps the game's biggest deficiency.

### Gameplay 6

While it's fun to play, there's too much repetition.

Score: 5

A screenshot from a video game showing a train on tracks at night. The train is dark and appears to be moving towards the viewer. In the background, there are buildings and streetlights. The game interface includes a speedometer at the bottom right and a small map or compass icon.

A screenshot from the game 'Road Rash'. The player character is a biker wearing a yellow vest and helmet, riding a blue motorcycle towards a bridge. A large sign above the bridge reads 'CHECK POINT'.

We've experienced the carnage that occurs in this game—in real life. And we said to ourselves, as we waited for the cop to finish writing up his report that night, Wow—this sucker. Videogames are way better than life.



# **Super Runabout:** San Francisco Edition

We left our hearts (and our hubcaps and our fenders) in San Francisco

**K**iss those pesky traffic rules goodbye. Super Runabout San Francisco Edition invites players to engage in such destructive and overly fun activities as smashing into stuff, blowing things up, performing dazzling Dukes of Hazzard-esque jumps and running down innocent pedestrians. It is, in short, a true-to-life portrayal of everyday automotive life in San Francisco.

Crazy Taxi's less insane cousin.  
*Mildly Wacky Taxi*.

Super Runabout does an excellent job of sustaining a goofy tone, asking players to derail a runaway cable car, collecting bombs and plowing through city collecting fixings for a hot dog. Everything in this decently rendered world is fodder for destruction; collisions are portrayed in the most exaggerated way possible, with cars hurtling in all directions, shattered glass spraying wildly, radiator steam gushing up, the sky and hoods and fenders buckling like the forces in *Mad Max II*.

Even a lowly motor scooter can be used to smash up a great big bus and the effect remains both wonderfully comic and oddly endearing.

**There are approximately 25-plus cars to unlock, including a tank, a street sweeper, a bus, a limousine, and—we are not making this up—a piggy. An ever-imposing time limit ensures a manic pace for every mission, and the well-designed streets (modeled authentically on the real McCoy) contain all kinds of shortcuts, just waiting to be discovered.**

Waiting to be discovered.

A screenshot from a video game. In the center, there's a brown pickup truck. Two characters are standing near it: one wearing a blue shirt and white pants, and another wearing a patterned jacket and dark pants. Above them, the text "What is your choice?" is written in a stylized font, followed by "SCENARIO". To the right of the characters, a large, bold letter "A" is partially visible. At the bottom of the screen, the text "THE POOR HAVE NO LEISURE" is displayed.

### You Make the Call

# **A THE POOR HAVE NO LEISURE!**

THIS CRYPTIC PERVERSE PHRASE, WHICH appears onscreen during the course scenario of *Super Runabout*: San Francisco Edition, troubles us. It brings to mind the old "society column" and "divorce court," which have been gathering dust in the back of our mental closets since college. Does this text imply that po' folks don't "get" leisure, or that they simply can't afford it? Does it insinuate that the elegant members of society on a vacation while millionaire events like polo tournaments and watercolor sandwiches would simply be wasted on the poor? Is it because the word "regatta" doesn't appear on spelling lists in most public schools? Or maybe we just need to take a nap.

# **B** BAD NEWS HAS WINGS

ANOTHER FITHY BON MOT, "BAD news has wings" (sic) not shown 'cause it looks just like the one above, only with the words "Bad news has wings," introduce the game's pollito scenario. News of the 'had' ilk has thusly been given the characteristics of a bird—which could suggest, by logical extension, that it can, in fact, defy gravity and fly south for the winter. Or that it can beg for a cracker—as in, "Bad news wants a cracker"—or mate for life like a parrot if it happens to meet a tidbit of good news that it likes...two opposites sticking together like male and female bits of Velcro...



Dreamcast  
Magazine

PUB SEGA DEV OLYMPIA ENTERTAINMENT GIGANT  
FISHING SENSATION JAPAN PLAYERS ONLINE NO  
PROMOTION

## **GRAPHICS 7**

Think a muddier version of *Crazy Taxi's* graphics.

## SOUND 6

### **CONTROL 5**

Darn those slippery and spastic cars!



**GAMERAT 7**  
Fun reigns over all the game's problems.

Score: 7

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[www.DailyRadar.com](http://www.DailyRadar.com)



## IN YOUR HEAD, IN YOUR HEAD, ZOMBIE ZOMBIE ...

**R**ACK IN THE 1960s, all you needed for rock stardom was to claim British citizenship. Rockin' rollers The Zombies, who neither rocked nor rolled with notable aplomb, managed to cut a brief patch of fame with a series of quirky but 'seminal' songs. They're individually responsible, it's said, for phenomena like 'The道士,' 'She's Not There,' and the whole success of UK pop music. A few hits like 'She's Not There' and 'Time of the Season' weren't enough to keep the Zombies alive, and after five years, they faded from the scene. Their final album (which went platinum) Odyssey and Oracle was about to be released. In an odd twist, CBS records attempted to resurrect the dead zombies, but the boys in the band demurred...



# Resident Evil 2

Swimming gorgeously in the dead pool... Come on in, the water's fine

**A**h, zombies. Their shambling, flesh-eating antics provide endless fodder for some of Dreamcast's finest titles. Now, Capcom is adding what might be its greatest non-DC exclusive epic to the undead mix: Resident Evil 2 joins the party on Dreamcast.

A 3D, third-person survival horror masterpiece, RE2 puts heroine Claire Redfield and newbie cop Leon Kennedy into a warzone, where the Ungrateful Dead are on tour and livening things up. Claire and Leon start in separate but interconnected adventures, which sprawl and bleed over two GD-ROMs.

The game itself remains unchanged from its PC, Play

Station, and Nintendo 64 iterations in terms of plot and pacing, but updated graphics add extra punch: characters and background seem even more endlessly ominous, not to mention sharper and crisper.

**Few games have ever come** close to capturing Evil 2's oppressive mood, decided creepy storyline and horrific

### BUILD A BETTER ZOMBIE ...

ACCORDING TO WEBSITE The Webtender ([www.webtender.com](http://www.webtender.com)), a fine zombie can be conjured from the following ingredients: Light rum, Creme de almond, Sweet and sour, Triple sec, Orange juice and 151 proof rum. Were we a less responsible publication, we would recommend that you shake all of the ingredients with some ice, and strain the result into a Collins glass over ice cubes. Then, we, if we weren't so darn morally upstanding, we might suggest that you float the rum on top and serve this undead concoction with a cherry. But we won't.

enemies. The Raccoon City Police Department headquarters where most of the adventure plays out is more tomb than hall of justice; every dull slap of shot against tile, every darkened corner and every moaning member of the Recently Exhumed Club helps to build a monument to delicious terror. The game seems to take perverse pleasure in administering brief shocks

(i.e., greedy, tentacled hands shooting out of a hole in the wall and grabbing at the hero, or a tantalizing glimpse of something scampering across a window pane and quickly disappearing into the murk) to churn the adrenaline at random intervals.

These scary elements, designed to elicit brute reaction, are mixed with moderately difficult puzzles that'll stir your intellect. It's a heady combination—and a clunky control system, which can often turn walking in a straight line into a Herculean task, was never a distraction big enough to pull us out of the game. In fact, nothing could stop this zombie hell from being...well, heavenly.

GREG ORLANDO

### Official Magazine Dreamcast.

PUBLISHER CAPCOM DEVELOPER CAPCOM  
GENRE HORROR AVANTAGE DREAMCAST SYSTEMS  
RELEASE DATE APRIL 2001 PRICE \$19.99

#### Graphics 8

They even made the sharper, clearer PC version

#### Sound 7

Amberant, diabolic sounds help sustain spookiness

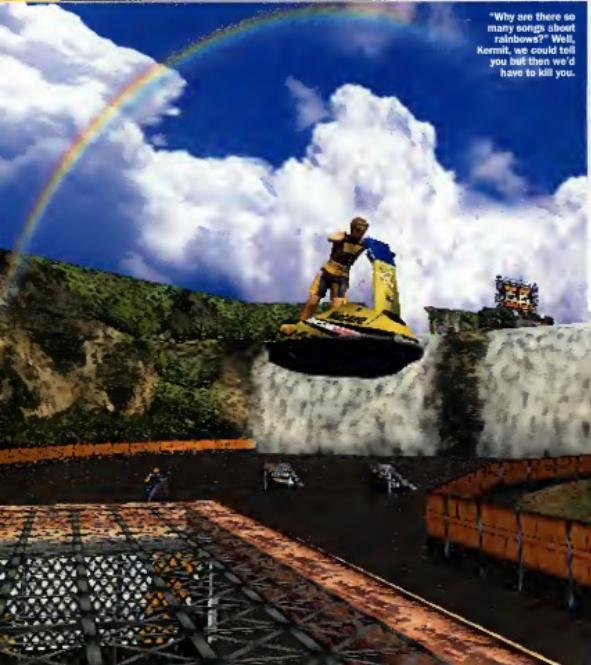
#### Control 5

Players must push a button to walk down stairs

#### Gameplay 8

Evil, very, very good

**Score: 8**



#### Quick like a bunny

To reach the few shortcuts in SSR, try the bunny hop. Simply hold down the R trigger for acceleration, then release the trigger, snap down on the left stick, and press the R trigger again for a quick jump. Do it with your eyes shut if someone's around to wake you up if you doze off.



# Surf Rocket Racer

Better hope a sofa cushion can be used as a flotation device...

**L**t's never a good sign when a new Dreamcast game can't even live up to the standards of a

lame title. *Surf Rocket Racer*, like *Hydro Thunder*, is an arcade-style speed fest across a watery landscape.

But unlike *Hydro Thunder*, it has rather mediocre graphics, few interesting shortcuts and even fewer cool unlockable

extras. With only a handful of tricks, characters and maps to explore, this one is soggy than the last frosted flake in the bowl.

**Which isn't to say that there aren't a few sparks of imagination in *Surf Rocket Racer*—there just aren't enough to start a fire of frenetic fun. There are only seven basic maps, with five of them lightly modified to create 13 slightly different courses. However, only two tracks have any visual flair. The Niagara Falls level sends racers over (you'll never guess) the Niagara Falls; the final phantom ship level has some nice scary moments. But unfortunately, the good bits**

only serve to remind players of just how boring the rest of the game is.

Visually, SSR underwhelms with bland textures and flat environments. The waves look nice, but from a physics standpoint, the interaction between surf rockets and water doesn't float. The wake behind rockets is a simple texture that doesn't move or reshape, succeeding only in looking utterly artificial. And while the bright skies, clear water and hidden caves of the Bahamas stage are quite pretty, settings in New York, Rome and the Amazon are just pretty darn dull.

**Unfortunately, things aren't spiced up by the routine game-**

## DROWNING BY NUMBERS



Although there have been stories of daredevils going over the Niagara Falls in a barrel, the real challenge has been crossing the great cascade by tightrope. Since the early 1820s, more than a dozen men have walked across the falls, and most of them have died. Was he sponsored by Pier 3 Imports? on his feet. FACT: while plummeting down the 180-foot Falls is a show way to drown, one can do it just as effectively in as little as six inches of water—many people are victims of their own bathubs. If, however, the lethal tubwater is cold, one can be revived with few ill effects up to an hour after unconsciousness, as long as someone is there to fish you out. Always use the buddy system, kids.

**POSITION****TIME 36****1 / 6****TOTAL TIME**

1:24"6600

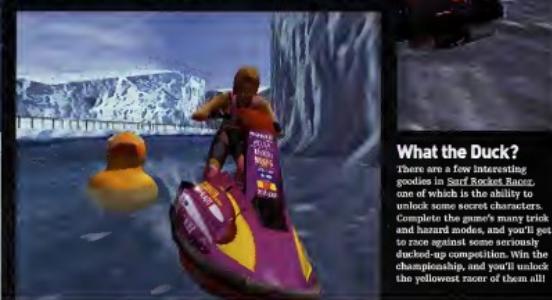
**LAP TIME**

1:1:24"633

2:-"---"

**+ 05 SECONDS!****BEST LAP**

1:20"933



### What the Duck?

There are a few interesting goodies in Surf Rocket Racer, one of which is the ability to race against a yellow rubber duck. Complete the game's many trick and hazard modes, and you'll get to race against some seriously ducked-up competition. Win the championship, and you'll unlock the yellowest roar of them all!

play. You'll choose between six different racers, each with slightly different speed, acceleration and handling stats. You can't create your own character, nor can you improve the stats of the six initial characters by winning races. And once you become good enough to handle the "expert" drivers, there is little reason to bother with the beginners ever again. But who needs replay value?

**The limited selection of** characters wouldn't be so bad if players could use their own *unlimited* to pick the right

driver for the right course. But once you've chosen a driver for a championship round, you can't switch drivers between races. In other words, you have to race the same character, with the same strengths and limitations, through both choppy straightaways in the Bahamas and narrow turns in New York.

**This strange glitch is made** even worse by the fact that you can't save your progress between races. So if you win the first three races of a championship and flush the final track

you'll need to race all four over again. It's an irritating and artificial way to inject more calories into an anorexic title.

**There are three other modes** besides the championship, but none of them are particularly exciting. The Tricks & Techniques mode, for instance, requires mastery of the game's broad selection of three—yes, three—tricks, which consist of the less-than-thrilling "bunny hop" plus some loops and barrel rolls off the ramps. Ideally, these sorts of tricks would come in handy in the regular

races, but since pulling stunts only adds a few seconds to the clock and often costs you vital speed, there is little reason to waste time on them.

**In other scenarios, you'll** collect balloons, race against the clock or challenge other players on the exact same courses. Yawn. Even with the hobbled save system, it didn't take us long to win the whole thing—twice. Given its lack of any real depth, Surf Rocket Racer proves (if nothing else) that a game really can drown in shallow water. **JIM FESTING**

Official Magazine  
**Dreamcast**

PUBLISHER CRAVE DEVELOPER CR CRASH  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE, INC./BENNE RACING  
PLATINUM AGE ENTERTAINMENT/BANDAI

**GRAPHICS 5**  
Budget graphics from the average to the ordinary

**SOUND 4**  
Engines whine over amorphous pop noodling

**CONTROL 7**  
Three Inclined Drives for Granddad!

**GAMEPLAY 3**  
Good news: it'll be over in a matter of hours

**Score: 4**



Note to self: When developing next first-person shooter, avoid hand-to-hand combat and tank-kicker sumo play at all costs.



### The Spawn of KISS

Any good KISS fan should already be well aware: Super-tastic creator Todd McFarlane has made it one of his goals in life to place the "ever enduring rock band" KISS in the pantheon of comic history with the Image Comics-published *KISS: Psycho Circus*. A monthly publication, *KISS: Psycho Circus* opts to plumb "the deepest, darkest corners of the imagination" rather than rocking 'n' rolling all night and recovering all day.



# KISS: Psycho Circus

*The Nightmare Child*: Now available with sins of omission included!

**I**n this day and age, it's hard to imagine what would motivate a company to publish a first person shooter with no multiplayer mode. The deathmatch experience in a first person shooter is more than just



another feature, it's the coup de grace. *KISS Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child* lacks a multiplayer mode. But its absence is consistent with the rest of the game, as it also

lacks a whole variety of other features—fun being the most apparent of them.

**The game** drops you right in the middle of a dark fantasy world with an objective that is too long and complicated to describe in this review. Putting the crux in a judgement-free sort of nutshell, we'll say that in order to beat the game, you must roam through a series of frightening levels while shooting hideously disfigured circus freaks. Sounds fine, but the devil is in the details.

*Psycho Circus* does boast the ability to throw more enemies at a player in one shot than we've ever seen in a

Dreamcast game (barring the 70-thug brawl in *Shenmue*). Whenever this happens—probably due to memory limitations—you'll note that the majority of your enemies onscreen are poorly rendered creatures of the headless spider and fire-spitting doglike monster ilk. The bosses—altered circus freaks like the Fat Lady and the Cannibal Man—are sufficiently macabre and not too hard on the eyes, but their fighting skills leave something to be desired. There's little imagination either in their patterns or in how you battle them. Every confrontation turns into a mindless, boring frag-a-thon with no satisfaction guaranteed.

**The game's plotline** places you in the rotating roles of all four KISS band members. As each member, you'll complete a given

task and receive a piece of armor for your trouble, which will then transform you into an immortal something-or-other. It all has something to do with the story, which, while imaginative and complex, gets kind of lost in so much knee-jerk trigger-pulling action—and in solving goofy puzzles, as well.

Exercises in frustration, the puzzles will have you retracing your steps all over the map seeking hidden objects and passageways. Which seems out of place in a game that (by the publisher's admission) is entirely devoted to action.

*KISS Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child* isn't inexcusably horrible. It just doesn't meet today's standards for FPS games, either in graphics or gameplay. And the fact that it has no online or multiplayer

gameplay to speak of is only the stale icing on an already tasteless cake.

GARRETT KENYON

Official Magazine  
**Dreamcast**

PUBLISHER TAKE TWO INTERACTIVE DEVELOPER THOMAS WILSON DESIGNER JEFFREY LEE FIRST PERSON SHOOTER DREAMCAST VHS/PAGES 3 PLAYERS 1 ONLINE NOODGE ESRB M PRICE \$39.99

#### GRAPHICS 6

Blurred and some levels are beautifully done, but textures tend to be blurry and blurry

#### SOUND 8

Light on the X16, ambient soundscapes provide a nice atmosphere

#### CONTROL 5

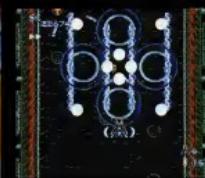
Nothing special here, keep moving, no keyboard or mouse support

#### GAMEPLAY 5

Not very challenging shooter without a lot of depth, no offline or multiplayer

**Score: 5**

There's no denying that *Bang!* is a beautiful game! But while graphics are pretty and control is solid, the shooting-and-collecting powerups ad nauseum can get a bit repetitive (or nauseating). But give it a rent and see for yourself.



Even this game's level of manic combat can't approach the most intense battles in *Star Wars: Episode I - Blazing Lasers* for the TurboGrafx. At one point, you were firing seven lasers simultaneously in a zig-zag frenzy filling the entire screen. Now that is a big bang!

# Bang! Gunship Elite

Best played with Pop-Rocks and a sixer of Coke

**B**ang! Gunship Elite is the sort of game that puts a happy, stupid grin on our faces. It's the kind of game that lets us crank the volume, mash on buttons and yell, "Suck it up, baby!" at the screen. It is, at heart, a classic console shooter in the tradition of *Gradius* or *R-Type*—but it's been executed with all of the spectacular graphics and effects made possible by Dreamcast.

There is a sort of a plot in *Bang!*, but any game that brings along its own exclamation point is not the game you're going to look for things like subtle

character development. Basically, *Bang!* puts you into the role of a hotshot space pilot who has to shoot just about anything that moves. That's about all the motivation we needed to fill the void of space with the debris of our enemies.

**The game unfolds over 19** different missions, but there is very little variation among them. Sometimes you have to protect a convoy from marauding pilots, other times you have to spearhead an attack on an enormous capital ship. For the most part it is

indeed pretty fun, but some of the later levels swamp you with so many enemies you're simply overwhelmed—and since you can only save between levels, you might occasionally get frustrated by the repetition.

However, we were not frustrated by the controls. The Dreamcast's analog stick is perfectly suited for this kind of game, and the simplified aiming means you'll kill just about anything sighted in your crosshairs. The enemy AI, however, is rather limited. Most ships will make only the weakest efforts to evade your shots,

and some will actually take cover behind a handy nearby asteroid. For the most part, you're simply fighting battle drones.

#### The nine different weapons

look and sound great, but beyond the visuals there is little imagination in the gameplay. Basically, you just shoot stuff, gather power-ups and use your shield now and then; but did we mention how pretty the game is? *Bang!* is certainly beautiful and fun to look at—but it won't give you much more than a cool callus on your trigger finger.

JIM PRESTON

Official Magazine  
**Dreamcast.**

PUBLISHER: MID STORM DEVELOPER: TAKUNG  
INTERACTIVE DESIGN: ACTION DESIGN UK PLAY-DE  
DISC: ONLINE: 10.1MB CD:

#### GRAPHICS 9

Superb colors and explosions. Yummm!

#### Sound 7

Weapons sound greasy and have much bass

#### Control 7

Ship is easy to fly but blasting baddies too easy

#### Gameplay 5

It's fun at first, but soon grows all too familiar

**Score: 6**



It's 9:00 am.

December 7, 1941.

Do you know where  
your Sega Dreamcast is?



Fly over 20 authentic WW II airplanes.



Keep in mind that even if you do run into the enemy, you should not shoot away your plane in a futile attack.



Realistic instrumentation puts you in control of your craft 64%.

Challenge your dogfighting skills in 17 unique missions.

If you know what's good for you, soldier, you're hooked into that Sega Dreamcast defending the good ol' American Navy from the enemy's surprise attack. And if you can stop 'em there, you'll have to escort those B-29's in their definitive attack on the largest naval fleet in the Pacific. I ain't talkin' 'bout no walk in the park here, soldier; this is an all out adrenaline rush of aerial combat. WW II style. Just an Ace and his machine. Two creatures forged from burning metal, moving as one. So strap into that Sega Dreamcast, soldier, and get ready to become one of the boys; one of the Iron Aces.

## IRON ACES



HIGH SPYNE

INTERACTIVE



E  
EVERYONE  
ESRB



# Welcome to the ultimate code experience...

We pored over past issues. We scoured the Internet. We dusted off the back library of games. And when we were done, we had compiled the largest listing of codes in **ODCM** history. Now, we could have just slapped these on the page—but we decided to do something a little more interesting. We decided to make a **mini codebook**. Or rather, we decided to let YOU make an official **ODCM** Mini Codebook™. Flip to the end for instructions on how to put it together.

Of course, if you're not into crafts or you don't want to cut up your magazine, it might be a little hard to find the codes, since they're arranged in a way that'll actually let you make the book. So we've compiled this handy index: if you're looking for a game, here's the mini codebook page where you'll find the info.

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## **Ultimate Online Resource**

As we scoured the web for codes, we found ourselves going back again and again to one site, formerly [www.gamesages.com](http://www.gamesages.com) and now <http://codes.ign.com>. In retrospect, it's no surprise, since the site is run by **ODCM**'s own code guru, Noah Massey. Anyway, if you're looking for the latest codes online—always tested—point yer browser to <http://codes.ign.com>.















**I. LEFT KLITZ 2.0 ETC.****Combat Changes**

At the versus screen, press

TURBO, Jump, and Press Up

Change the kick to move the left

Unstoppable Sat Cannon

DODGE, 1111, Dan Fagoon

GENTL, 1111, Jim Guttin

GRITCH, 0022, Punk

With Space

JASIN, 3141, Jason Johnson

LEON, 0834, Dan Thompson

LUBI, 3333, Lemire, Heath

Mang-E, 1111, Mang-E

MORSE, 1111, A Rose Head

NIGHT, 1111, Night

PUNK, 3333, Punk, Jeff

PUNK, 3333, Punk, Jeff

RAGIN, 3054, Ragin from UK

RAULH, 1111, Raulh

ROBB, 0000, Robb

SAD, 1111, Sad Face

SHIN, 0000, Shin Dara

SHIN, 3137, Demon

SHOK, 3111, Shok

SPARK, 3111, Spark

TREZ, 1111, Trez

TURB, 0000, Turb

Turn, 0000, Turn

ALEC, 1157, Alec

AHL, 3111, AHL

AUBREY, 7777, Aubrey

AZURO, 4777, Azu

BRIAN, 2221, Brian

CALEB, 0906, Caleb

DAMO, 3333, Damo

EUDIE, 3333, Eudie

FRANZ, 2220, Franz

GRITCH, 2220, Gr

GUARD, 2222, Gu

JONE, 9999, Jone

JUN, 7777, Jun

LIL, 7777, Lil

MAY, 3334, May

NATHAN, 0005, Natha

NEO, 4440, Neo

RANDO, 6666, Rand

WHOO, 844, Whoo

With Space

XMAS, 3333, Xmas

YOUNG, 3333, Young

ZEPHYR, 3333, Zephyr



# HOW TO ASSEMBLE YOUR OFFICIAL ODCM MINI CODEBOOK™!

You have the power...now find a stapler and a pair of scissors and get to work

**Putting together your codebook is simple. First,** just cut each page out along the dotted line. Keep the pages in the same order that they were in the magazine. Now fold them in the center (you may want to fold each sheet individually). Fold the pages so that the inside of the fold has an even number on the left, and a higher odd number on the right. Flip through the book to make sure the pages are all in the right order.

Now, you need to staple the center of the codebook. And sadly, your average Swingline just isn't going to reach the center where you want to put the staples. So what do you do? In a pinch, you can just staple the left edge

(fig. 1), straight through the side. This will reduce the margins inside the book, but it's probably the quickest and easiest solution.

The second strategy is to fold over one half of the book so that the stapler can reach the center (fig. 2). Unfortunately, this method ends up leaving half of your pages creased.

Finally, you can go out and drop \$40 on an extended reach stapler that can reach the center without folding any pages. OR you can head to a copy center like Kinko's, and ask to use their big extended reach stapler (fig. 3). They probably won't even charge you for the staples, once they see how cool your codebook is.



Fig. 1.

This is the easiest way to assemble your codebook. Just put a couple of staples through the side, as close to the spine as you can. This makes the book a little harder to use, but it'll still work and look okay.



Fig. 2.

By folding over half of the pages, you can staple the book in the center of the spine like a magazine (this is called "saddlestitching," FYI), which looks and works great. Except that those pages tend to stay folded. Gr...



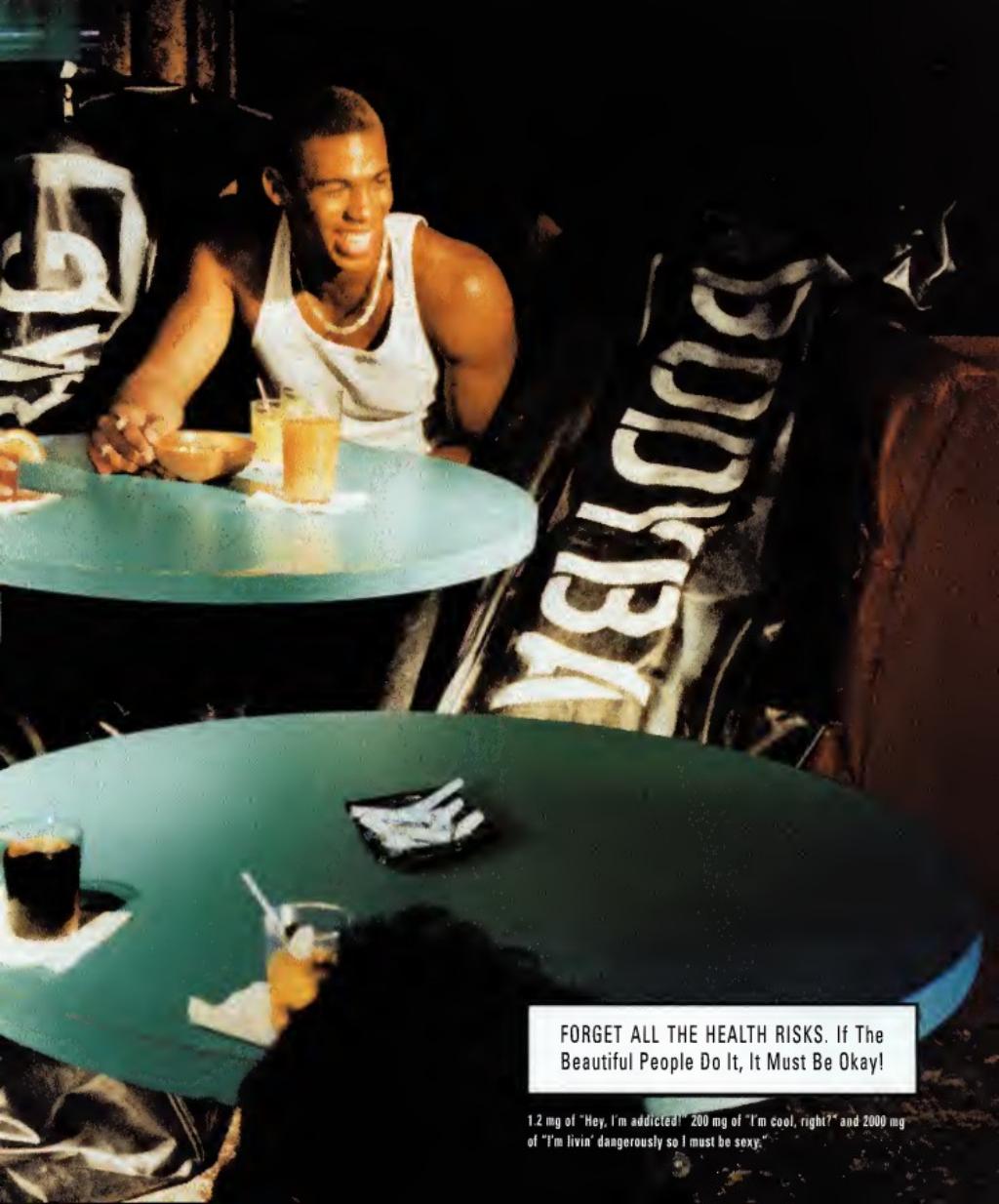
Fig. 3.

The ultimate solution is to find an extended reach stapler like this one, which can reach all the way to the middle of the spine for a neat look without bending any pages. You can find these staplers at most full service copy shops.



**What if cigarette ads told the truth?**





**FORGET ALL THE HEALTH RISKS. If The Beautiful People Do It, It Must Be Okay!**

1.2 mg of "Hey, I'm addicted" 200 mg of "I'm cool, right?" and 2000 mg of "I'm livin' dangerously so I must be sexy."



# Talk Back

## The Official ODCM Interview

Welcome to TalkBack, the first in an occasional series of interviews with the movers and shakers that make the Dreamcast world so great. This time, we spoke with two members of the crack Soul Reaver team: Lead Programmer Marc David and Senior Designer Riley Cooper.

**ODCM:** Soul Reaver looked great. Can we expect to see many improvements in SR2, in terms of graphics?

**Marc David:** We've redone the graphics system quite a bit, and I think we've done an excellent job. The main improvement is in the amount of polygons that we're able to push on the SR2 engine. We're rendering 50,000 polygons at 80 frames a second. This is a huge improvement over SR1 on the Dreamcast (it rendered 10,000 [poly]s per frame at best). This allows us to have more realistic and engaging environments. We've also redone the

special effects system, which is incredibly feature packed. I think you'll be really pleased when you see all the great effects it can achieve. Finally, I'd like to note that we've been able to do many more algorithmic effects, such as realtime IK and cloth simulation, to add a higher level of realism. Look for Soul Reaver 2 to be a huge jump in quality from Soul Reaver, especially on all fronts.

**ODCM:** What improvements can we expect to see in gameplay? Will puzzles be easier? Harder? What about all those blocks?

**Riley Cooper:** You can expect a lot of improvements in gameplay. For starters, the game will always be running at 60 frames per second on both the Dreamcast and the PS2. This will improve every aspect of the gameplay experience, but especially in combat—we can have more enemies onscreen at any given time. On top of that, we've also improved the AI so the fighting will be more fun overall.

Other great improvements in gameplay affect the puzzles. For example, we are being very careful not to put players in situations where it isn't clear what they need to do next. Also, in SR1, we were sometimes criticized for having too many block puzzles. So we've worked hard to introduce many new puzzle-related objects for Raziel to interact with throughout the game. This enables us to increase the complexity of the puzzles in the game, to keep up with the players' growing puzzle-solving ability.

**ODCM:** Soul Reaver ended in a cliffhanger. Does SR2 complete at least this chapter in the saga?

**RC:** That and much more. That chapter is addressed right away, and it opens into the heart of the SR2 story—which involves time travel. In this game, Raziel travels throughout Nosgoth's history, uncovering for the fans more of Raziel and Cain's past.

**ODCM:** Without giving anything away, what can we expect from the story this time around?

**RC:** In addition to what we feel is one of the cooler videogame story endings ever, you can expect a much more full story throughout. It includes both back story elements that are communicated through murals, allowing the player to learn about them at their leisure, as well as more important elements of the story that directly guide Raziel's actions. Besides that, you should notice that every aspect of the game's design is driven by the story. SR2 was story driven, but it had many aspects that were somewhat formulaic. This time around, just about everything that we're creating has been inspired by the story itself—which means that we've created a much more cohesive and original experience.





## DRIVER A

- Greets colleagues with a firm self-confident handshake.
- Dated cheerleaders in high school.
- Has lipstick on underwear.
- Smokes after sex.

# MSR

METROPOLIS STREET RACER

Welcome to Metropolis Street Racer where going fast isn't enough—you've gotta go fast and look good. MSR is the only racing game where you're judged on KUDOS points based on style as well as speed. MSR also features amazing recreations of real cities. London, Tokyo, and San Francisco, are shown in incredible detail, right down to the street signs and radio stations. So check out Metropolis Street Racer and see if you've got what it takes to maintain air intake at 180 mph.



## DRIVER B

- Offers a limp and clammy handshake that screams of self doubt.
- Wasn't allowed to date in high school.
- Has superheroes on underwear.
- Apologizes after sex.



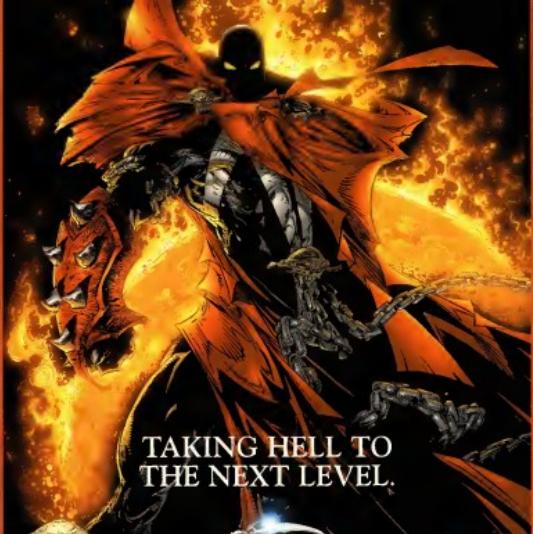
Dreamcast

[sega.com/msr](http://sega.com/msr)

E  
ESRB



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TAKING HELL TO  
THE NEXT LEVEL.

# SPAWN

In The Demon's Hand



Todd McFarlane's blockbuster comic book characters come to life on Sega Dreamcast. Compete in the four-player simultaneous Battle Royal mode. Includes the original Arcade Mode and tournament style Dreamcast Mode. All your favorite characters from the SPAWN series are faithfully recreated in the ultimate death match challenge.

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MATURE  
**M**  
Advanced Blood  
Advanced Violence

TODD MCFARLANE  
ENTERTAINMENT  
**SPAWN.COM**



CAPCOM  
**CAPCOM.COM**

Dreamcast